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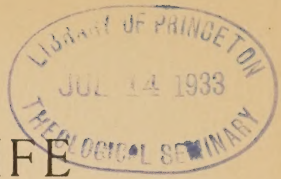
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The heaven-life, or,
Stimulus for two worlds

Julia S. Bergen

THE HEAVEN-LIFE



THE HEAVEN-LIFE

OR

STIMULUS FOR TWO WORLDS

BY

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“ Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own.”

WHITTIER.

“ As the lark sings sweetly when she soars on high, but is suddenly silenced when she falls to the earth, so the soul lives well when by contemplation it rises to God and heaven ; but it lives poorly, or rather not at all, spiritually, when it lives out of sight of heaven.”—BAXTER.

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I


“ THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT
IS IN HEAVEN ”

SYLLABUS

The literature on the future life shows man's interest in the future life.—Is there an authentic satisfying revelation? —A wrong popular impression that we are all in the dark. —Christ our Teacher.—Socrates and Christ.—The fact of immortality is presupposed.—Why accept this presupposition?—1. Because it is the best thing we can do. It is the best workable hypothesis. It secures the best results. The dictum of science.—2. Because it accords with the teaching of the symbolism of nature. The voices of the sunrise and the spring. The present construction of our human bodies an argument.—3. Because it is necessary as a vindication of the character of God as a perfect worker.—4. Because we long for it, and it alone can satisfy us.

I

WHAT THE HEAVEN-LIFE PRESUPPOSES

HE future life is a subject which has interested the thought of man from the very beginning. The literature on this subject shows this. Back in antiquity are such works as "The Book of the Dead," the product of Egypt; Homer's "Odyssey" and Plato's "Phædo," the products of Greek thought; and Virgil's "Æneid," the product of the Latin mind. In more modern times are such works as Dante's "Inferno," the product of the middle ages; "Gates Ajar," "They Met in Heaven," and "The Life Beyond," the product of the American mind. The literature on the subject is a striking commentary. It declares that the future life

has a charm and a fascination for the human mind which nothing can break. Our friends have entered into it. What wonder, then, that our thoughts should enter into it! We ourselves are on our way to the future life. What wonder, then, that we should try to forecast what is there! Forecasting is one of the essentials to enthusiastic preparation for the life which is to be.

Is there any revelation pertaining to that life which is authentic and satisfying? That is the question which meets us on the threshold of this brief course of study. As a Christian I answer, There is. All Christianity requires me to give this answer. The substance of Christianity is this: "Life and immortality have been brought to light in the gospel." Christianity means the risen Christ, and the risen Christ means a risen life for all the people of Christ. The teachings of Christianity relative to the future life are so broad, so deep, so constant, so clear, so fundamental, so fearless, so positive, that if

you take them out of Christianity you leave the Christian religion a magnificent ruin. Everything about heaven and the heaven-life is not told us, because we are not capable of receiving everything; but enough is told us to give us rest of soul, to fill us with intense longing, to comfort us amid earth's sorrows and separations, and to inspire us with a holy ambition to live here a grand immortal life, so that we may be ready for the life to come.

I know that there is an impression abroad that we are all in the dark with regard to this matter; but the impression is wrong. It is detrimental to Christianity with its risen Christ. It is fatal to devout and reverent thought and investigation. It hides the eternal life and dwarfs the earthly life. It closes the New Testament and keeps God's people ignorant of what is written.

Upon what is this popular impression based? An article in the *Nineteenth Century*, written by an agnostic whose faith consists in negations, lets light in here. This article

tries to make it out that the Scriptures teach us that men are all in the dark with regard to this matter. The writer quotes the words of Paul, and then bases his article upon them. He says Paul writes (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10): "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." If we grant the writer his premise, we must admit his conclusion, viz., we *are* all in the dark. But I do not grant the author his premise. If Paul says just what the author quotes him as saying, and nothing more, then Paul's words clash with the other words of the New Testament. They clash with his own glorious chapter, the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, in which he deals with the things of the future life as known certainties. They clash with the inspired pictures of heaven with which John closes the Apocalypse. All of these conceptions of the glories of heaven are in the heart of man, and they find their way out into a sub-

lime visibility through the points of inspired pens. I deny the premise of the author. "What!" you ask me, "do you deny that Paul wrote these words quoted?" I answer, The quotation is only a half-quotation, and is therefore a misrepresentation of what Paul really taught. Nay, more, as a half-quotation it is the very opposite of what Paul taught. Paul taught that God's people are not in the dark in this matter of the future life. He taught that God's people are in the light relative to it. The words quoted are in the same epistle in which his glorious resurrection chapter occurs, and by them Paul is getting the minds of his readers ready for that chapter, with its grand revelations of what is coming by and by. When given in full, Paul's words speak for themselves. They read thus: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit,*" By his Spirit he has

given us the story of the translation of Enoch, and the ascension of Elijah, and the Sixteenth Psalm, and the Twenty-third Psalm, and the Seventy-third Psalm, and the vision of Daniel, and the triumphant cry of Hosea over death, and the history of the resurrection and ascension, and the coming again of Jesus Christ, and the argument of the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and the sublime vision of the Apocalypse. A man in the dark and yet living in the midst of the revelations of these Scriptures! How can it be? He can be in the dark only by persistently keeping his eyes shut or by wilfully putting his eyes out.

Is there any revelation pertaining to the future life, a revelation which is authentic and satisfactory? I repeat the answer which I have already given—There is; and it is found in Christ and his gospel.

So full was Christ of revelations concerning the future life that he could not give his disciples a simple form of prayer without putting into it a picture of heaven and the future life.

By this prayer he was instructing his people what to build into the earthly life. They should build into it right ideas of God; adoration of God; trust in God; purity of thought, i.e., the mind of God; holiness of walk, i.e., communion with God; and constant praise, i.e., worship. In a word, they should make their earth-life like the heaven-life. He says to them, "Pray to God, 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.'"

To fit them for living their earth-life, and to fill them with inspiration, he tells them of their origin, and he gives them a vision of their destiny. God is their Father and heaven is their future home; and because of this they should begin to live the heaven-life now.

You see that I make much of the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God who descended from heaven, is our teacher relative to the heaven-life. I do so because I wish to show that the study of the life in heaven is a legitimate study, carrying with it loyalty to Christ and fairness to ourselves.

In emphasizing the fact that Jesus Christ is our teacher I wish to call attention to this fact also: that he is the most emphatic teacher on this subject that the world has.

With many others the future life is an hypothesis, a hope, a maybe, at best only a burning desire; but with Jesus Christ it is a fact and a known reality. He speaks about it with authority, and asserts it without equivocation or qualification. In this regard he contrasts with Socrates, for example. No uninspired teacher ever came so near to the true doctrine of life and immortality as Socrates. But Christ leads Socrates. The teachings of Socrates, as preserved for us by Plato, his favorite pupil, and as given in the "Phædo," are wonderful. Socrates was doomed to die. Intellectual Athens had sentenced him to drink a cup of poison. Some twelve or fourteen of his friends spent with him his last day of earthly existence, and at his own request spent it in discoursing upon immortality. In the conversation Soc-

rates analyzed his sentence, and concluded that his judges had conferred upon him a great favor by ordering his death. These were his words: "If death be a going hence to the place where I shall enjoy the company of Homer and Hesiod and the good from all lands and ages, what greater benefit could my judges confer upon me than to order me to be introduced to such company?" After reasoning that immortality is a reasonable probability, he summed up all by saying, "This, or something like this, is the destiny of our souls. The risk is overbalanced by the gain. It is well to find a charm for one's fears; and on this account it is that I thus prolong our talk." And then on the strength of the pleasing peradventure he drank the cup of poison. Plato says, "There passed away of all men whom we have known the best, the wisest, and the most just." Contrast Jesus Christ with Socrates! When Jesus Christ faced death there was no speculation about what was before him, and no

uncertainty about the words which he uttered: "I came from my Father. I go to my Father." "I have power to lay my life down, and I have power to take it again." "The Son of man shall be crucified, but he shall rise again on the third day." To his sorrowing disciples he said, in view of his death, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." To the Father he said, as he faced the cross, "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "Grant that these my disciples may be with me, that where I am there they may be also; that they may behold my glory." Heaven, with its coming life full of fellowship with his people, was just as real to him as the cross, and he talked about it with the same assurance. There was an "if" in the statement of Socrates—"if" on the other side of death he is to meet with Homer and Hesiod and the good of all lands, then death must be a blessed thing. But when Christ

speaks of those who are yonder there is no "if." Without doubt there shall be the fellowship of the good on the other side of death. His words are explicit: "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

Not only does Jesus Christ contrast with Socrates in the directness and positiveness of his teachings about the future life; he contrasts also with the Old Testament writers, and with the teachers of his day. Life and immortality are in the Old Testament, but they are not there as explicitly as they are in the New Testament. There were people in the days of Jesus Christ who held to the Old Testament as the text-book of their faith, but who denied the existence of spirit, and held and taught that there was no such thing as a resurrection from the dead. These men were tolerated in Israel, God's Old Testament people. More than this; they were members of the sanhedrim, the ruling court of the

land. Thus obscure and thus optional were the ideas of the future life. After Christ came and taught there was no such obscurity. He illumined the Old Testament and made the future life shine out from it. He changed the future life from a problem into a solution; from an hypothesis into a dogma; from a surmise and a hope into an assurance and a direct, unmistakable fact. This petition from the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," is an example of the faith of Christ—the faith which he had and which he taught and which he would have possess his people. He took heaven for granted, and assumed the existence of life and immortality. With him the future life was no problem, no uncertainty. About heaven there was no doubt, no question. There is a life in heaven, and it is perfect; it is all that it should be; it is all that can be desired. That is settled, completely, satisfactorily. The earth-life is the problem. How can it be lifted to a parallel with the

heaven-life? That was the only question in the mind of Christ. We are certain that the earth-life, with its disorders and pains and imperfections, is a fact; Christ is just as certain that the heaven-life, with its divine order and its bliss and its perfection, is a fact; and he is certain that this heaven-life is an eternal thing. His people shall live it forever; therefore they ought to begin to live it here and now. How this heaven-life shall be filled up we shall inquire in a future study.

Something is presupposed before we can make such inquiry. The fact of life and immortality is presupposed. The fact of our death also is presupposed; but we do not need to dwell on that. Relative to the certainty of death we need no assurance. The air is full of farewells to the dying and mourning for the dead. Earth is billowed with graves; life is crowded with the bitter-sweet memories of friends who have left us; the cities we live in were built by the dead; the books in our libraries were written by

the dead. Contemporary thought is in the minority in the world of books. There is no question about the fact of death. The question is, Does death end all? To assert that there is a life in heaven is to assume that death does not end all; it is to presuppose that we shall live after death; it is to take for granted that there will be a resurrection and that we shall live forever. This is what is presupposed when we speak of life in heaven. This is what Christ took for granted when he taught his disciples to ask God that his will might "be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Christ says we shall live again. Shall we? Christ says we shall rise from the dead. Shall we? Christ says we are immortal. Are we? If not, then there can be no life in heaven, and we may as well dismiss the subject first as last; but if so, then life in heaven is not only a possibility, but an absolute necessity.

I accept what is here presupposed, viz., that we shall live again; that we shall rise from the

dead ; that we are immortal. Do you ask me why I accept it? I will give you some of the reasons why I accept this faith.

1. *Because it is the best thing I can do.*

There is no other faith equal to it. It is common sense to take the best. The negations of materialism are not equal to it. It is the best workable hypothesis that has ever been proposed to mankind. It secures the best results. Even science teaches us that the hypothesis that produces the best products is the hypothesis that should win the day and should secure the homage of man.

The product of this faith is a life kept pure and holy for God ; a magnificent manhood built up while on earth as a preparation for eternity, and as something worthy of being carried into the beyond and perpetuated there. The man who holds this faith lives for eternity. Now they who live for eternity live grandly, nobly, godly. They who live without this faith live like the beasts which perish ; they live among the low things of the

world, and sensually. Their philosophy is this: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The product of this faith is comfort, consolation, hope, when we stand by the grave of our friends, and when we ourselves face death. The absence of this faith is sorrow without hope, the blackness of darkness, and tormenting despair. I tell you that a faith which produces such products is not lightly to be thrown away. To doubt it means a man's own misery. My fellow-man, you can never know a happy day without it. Toss it aside if you dare; but it will not remain tossed aside. It will haunt you with its bright products, and never let you rest comfortably in any other belief. I accept it because it is the only faith that brings peace to my soul. Would I not be a fool to fight against my own peace? Outside of this faith there is nothing but poisonous pessimism. Life is not worth living; it is inefficient, futile, superfluous, empty, monotonous, wearisome;

life is a burden, and death is the sorrow of sorrows.

The products of this magnificent faith—I am willing to rest everything upon these as an argument. “True religion does not rest upon logic, but on results produced. When you put side by side the highest results of infidelity and the highest results of religion, logic is silenced. You have before you a question of fact. Admit that better qualities of character are developed by religion than by atheism—a serener kind of endurance under suffering, a larger hopefulness when death knocks at your door—and you have proved your case. The dictum of science is that the theory which does the best work and produces the best results is more likely to be true than any other theory.”

A late writer puts the case in this way—he is arguing with a materialist:

“Admit that your materialism is true and that my Christianity is false; still you are forced to concede that the one develops the

noblest qualities of the human character, and the other signally fails to do so. Under the one the soul enlarges and becomes purified; under the other it shrinks and becomes desperate. In other words, the world and the soul are so constituted that the alleged delusions of Christianity are worth more as an incentive to progress, to civilization, to orderly society, to philanthropy, and to the whole range of qualities which we call the virtues, than is the truth represented by materialism. What kind of a universe must it be in which falsehood and hallucination can make a nobler manhood than the truth?"

I accept the faith which believes in the resurrection and immortality

2. Because of what I see in nature.

In nature a hundred things prophesy and proclaim a resurrection.

I see the day buried in the darkness of night, but rising again in the morning. Awakened by the morning bugle of the mountaineer, from some Alpine summit I watch the

resurrection of the day. Redder and redder grows the east. Banners of flame and leaping cohorts of fire fill the eastern sky. Darkness recedes into the valleys, and lo! the sunlight breaks over the horizon. The mountains, in encircling amphitheater tier on tier, and peak backed by higher peak, are assembled in silent, awful majesty to greet the king of day. And he crowns them all with his glory as a reward for their waiting and greeting. The mighty sunrise bathes a thousand snowy Alps in fire and gold, in leaping flame and in spreading glow. When the sunrise is complete the day lives again in all its grandeur and the night has fled out of sight. In this sublime scene of nature there is a voice of God crying "Resurrection!"

I see nature at the close of autumn putting on a shroud and for a time passing into the grave of winter. But nature is not dead; she only sleeps. When God shakes the sunshine of the spring from the folds of his robes of light, and when she feels the touch of wiz-

ardry which comes with every beam, she awakens into a new beauty. In all this, too, there is a voice crying "Resurrection!"

I hear the resurrection cry rising from the thousand growing seeds. There are eighty thousand kinds of plants with their millions and millions of seeds; and each seed contains the doctrine of a resurrection and a future life. Each seed has its individuality, and God never mistakes one seed for another. In the resurrection of seeds he never gives one seed the body which belongs to another. A seed may be wrapped away for a thousand years in the cerements of the Egyptian mummy, but a thousand years cannot hinder its resurrection. God preserves its life and its identity, and when planted gives it a resurrection and gives it its own body. If God thus clothes the grass of the field, will he not clothe you, O man?

All these things of nature convince me that God has the power to realize the faith which carries in it the doctrine of the resur-

rection, which life in heaven takes for granted. When God is the worker such a faith is not too great.

But we have not seen the greatest product of nature yet. To my mind the greatest product of nature is this human body which nature has built up and given me as the instrument of my soul. The power that once put it up can put it up again when it is taken down. Its resurrection is not a greater miracle than its first construction. Edwin Arnold, writing in the *Fortnightly*, and upon this very subject of the future life, elaborates this precise point, viz., the God who first made the body can remake the body. This is a brief paragraph from his treatise :

“I stood last year in the central aisle of the Health Exposition at South Kensington and observed a graceful young English girl lost in a momentary interest over the show-case, which contained in crude form ingredients like those in her fair and beautiful frame. There—exactly measured out, and bottled

and labeled—were the constituents of a human body: lime, water, phosphorus, silex, iron, and the other elements which are woven into bone and muscle and blood. As I watched her half-amused, half-incredulous countenance the question came into my mind, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” God has raised these elements, these coarse ingredients in these glass jars, by the delicate chemistry of nature, and there they are in the peerless beauty, the joyous health, the exquisite capacity, and the lovely human life of that bright maiden who contemplates with an incredulous smile these materials of her being. More than this, in her I see the continuity of life. She is the charming heir-ess of as many lines and stems of life as those which made up her ancestors. Science finds the tiny golden beginnings of her life and character away back as far as she can trace her genealogy. She is the last development of a long line of life.”

But what is the pertinency of all this? This: God is doing every day as wonderful things as the things implied in the belief of the resurrection from the dead; and if he says there shall be a resurrection of the dead there shall be, for there is nothing to hinder it. In nature he has given me its equivalent, that I may be helped to believe in it itself.

I accept the faith in a future life

3. *Because it is necessary as a vindication of the character of God as a perfect worker.*

The attributes of God are all perfect, and they are vouchers to me that he is a perfect worker. His work in the life of man must be perfect if his character is to stand. The present life is too brief to match the plans and powers and wishes of mankind. At the close of life men are conscious of faculties for which as yet they have had no adequate field and opportunity. The young minister scarcely does more than preach his first sermon, the young lawyer scarcely does more than make his first plea, the young scientist scarcely does

more than make his first knock at the door of the unknown, when the summons to leave all comes. Then look at the multitudes who pass out of life in infancy. Some of them, if spared, could have sung as well as Homer; others could have reigned over assemblies with voices as sceptered as the voice of Demosthenes; others could have wielded pens as royal as the pen of Macaulay. What incompleteness! What a tragic waste of faculty if death ends all! Without immortality the present life is a ghastly mockery, an infinite series of abortions. We need a glorious future to redeem the present from contempt. If God is to be a perfect worker in our case he must see to it that we have the glorious future required.

Here is a man who has improved his time and talents and opportunities; he is a grand development; he is formed in the prodigality of nature; he is a great soul, and is both pure and good; he is the Fifteenth Psalm incarnate; he is a man to be trusted in a

dark and trying experience ; he is a man of uprightness and of straightforward gaze ; he lives under the impulses of love ; when he is indignant at wrong his burning words are fringed with pity. Can God let death be the end of that man, the end of his growth and endowment and influence ? The universe needs just such men. Earth needs them ; heaven needs them. To let that man with his faculties and character and influence pass out of existence would be an awful, pitiable waste. Dare God be guilty of such a waste ? Not if he has any regard whatever for his character as a perfect worker.

Here is another case ; it is altogether the extreme of that which I have just given. It is a child, born imperfect, a cripple, a sufferer, and oh, what a sufferer ! It has known nothing but a mattress-grave ever since it was born. Its face has been whitened to ghastly paleness, and its limbs twisted out of shape by excruciating pain. Is that a complete work of God ? You say God is good.

No, if that be all; no, if there be no compensations for that. I tell you that that thing cannot be made right save by the gift of an eternity of glory. There must be a heaven and a heaven-life to make that all right, for here and now it is all wrong. "O mother!" said a crippled boy when by his bedside of suffering they talked to him concerning heaven—"O mother! shall I be straight there and happy there?" The mother simply and quietly opened the Bible and allowed God to speak for himself to her boy. Opening the holy Book, she read: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." With these words of God soothing his soul and body the child fell asleep in Jesus, to awaken perfect in the

resurrection day, with a body fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. I believe in the perfect beyond because of the imperfect here. The character of God requires that there shall be an eternity for righting the wrongs of time.

I accept the faith in a future life

4. *Because I long for it with an intense longing, and because it alone can satisfy me.*

I take this longing of my soul to be a prophecy. "There is something away out in the future that draws the soul to it. For this something the soul yearns. The soul's yearning proves the reality of yonder something." Astronomers tell us that the great planet which moves on the outermost circle of our system was discovered because the planet next to it wavered in its course in a fashion that was inexplicable unless some unknown mass was attracting it from across millions of miles of darkling space. The telescope was directed toward yonder point, and true enough, a new and a great world

came into sight. There is something drawing us out toward the future and creating in us a perceptible feeling; that something reason says is immortality. If there were no immortality out yonder there would be no drawing, no desire here. God has set eternity in the heart. Human nature hungers for immortality with a divine and deathless famine. This hunger, this desire, was put there by God, and it is a prophecy of that which shall satisfy it. God must fulfil his prophecies. He always does. Owen, the naturalist, finds a fossil five hundred feet underground. He says the animal lived on the surface of the earth. How does he know? Why, there are sockets for the eye. Nature makes nothing in vain. It must have lived where the light was. The world says, "That is logic." Now in man we find a yearning, a desire, a hope for immortality. Can you believe that God who made the water for the web-foot, and light and beauty for the eye, has forgotten the soul? Addi-

son's Cato frames the argument with which we are dealing :

“ It must be so, Plato. Thou reasonest well.
Else whence this pleasing hope? This fond desire?
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself and startles at destruction?
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us ;
'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.”

I find this illustration in the writings of Dr. Hepworth, which serves me here. Some of you will recall it. “ There is an old rabbinical legend, and it runs thus: When Joseph was prime minister to Pharaoh, during the period of the famine, he emptied the chaff of his granaries into the Nile. It floated far away on the moving current, and the people on the banks at a great distance below saw it. It was only chaff, but it meant that there was corn in plenty somewhere. Chaff always means corn; and yet the chaff is worthless. You could not persuade those people that they were mistaken. They were

suffering the pangs of hunger, and had supposed that the famine extended throughout the entire country, and that everybody was as hungry as themselves. They were sure that if their strength held out they could reach the point at which the chaff had been thrown into the river, when they would find plenty for themselves and their famishing families. Adown the stream of time there come floating to our hearts certain dreams of bliss: reunion with those we have loved and lost; the longing for rest; and the desire for a future life and holiness. The race has enjoyed these hopes since it first began to struggle. They are the chaff; but the corn which is higher up the stream in the granaries of God will be ours by and by."

This much we have reached, viz., the conditions for a life in heaven are certain. They are such as these: life and immortality. Christ teaches this, and human need and the structure of the soul and the character of God all corroborate the teaching of Christ. Death

shall be swallowed up in victory, and this mortal shall put on immortality. God has pledged himself that as immortal creatures we shall be ushered into heaven and shall be inducted into its fullness of life and joy.



II


“AND HIS SERVANTS SHALL SERVE HIM”

SYLLABUS

The points already reached stated.—The argument of the fitness of things.—Love as immortal as the soul.—The Book teaches that we enter heaven with a perfect personality.—We shall have perpetual youth.—Scripture proof of this.—All the symbols which picture heaven set forth great activity and intense life.—It is a busy home; a crowded city.—The saved far outnumber the lost.—Work in heaven a matter of self-relief.—As varied as the tastes and abilities of those who are there.—No danger of secularizing heaven by this view.—The occupations of heaven are: 1. Fathoming and finishing the postponements of earth. 2. The full and perfect worship of God; the variety in singing the song of redemption; the different classes who lead heaven in this song. 3. Cultivating holy fellowships and renewing and developing human loves. 4. Receiving and executing sublime commissions.—All this takes away the fear of death.—Death is only a knocking at the Golden Gate, which opens into the forever.—It is a gain.

II

THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE HEAVEN-LIFE

N our former study we came to the conclusion that there is a future life for man. It is a necessity. We entered into ourselves and penetrated our personality until we reached the earnest center of our being, and then we interrogated our deepest intuitions, and these all said, "There is a future life for man." It is a necessity. Every faculty of man demands it. His nature was made for it. His soul cries for God, the ever-living God.

Man in his construction is like a cathedral church. Every point in such a church rises upward, and teaches us a lesson as it rises. The foundation, of course, must be put on

earthly rock; but step by step every line of the plan struggles up and away from that rock. The tower grows slenderer as it goes into the serener air; the steeple surmounts that, till it is ready to be lost in a spire; so likewise the spire soars on aloft into sweet sunshine until it is crowned by the figure of a tall angel in white; and the angel keeps looking upward, and even his hand is extended, and the slender index-finger points heavenward, heavenward, still. Thus one nature of man rises upon another upward and Godward and eternityward. His physical nature alone rests upon the earth-rock. Above the physical is the mental, seeking if perchance it may find out God; above the mental is the moral, with the index-finger pointing to God; above the moral is the spiritual, and that perpetually reaches aloft after God, the ever-living God. For the satisfaction and completion of the upper nature of man eternity is necessary.

There was another reason why we con-

cluded that there is a future life for man. It was a reason drawn from God. It was this: the reputation, character, credit of God as a perfect worker, demand a life beyond this life. This earth-life of ours which is constructed under him is only a fragment. Ten thousand imperfections are connected with it. At best it is only a sky-rocket that rises up toward heaven and bursts into so many colors, and then forever goes out into darkness. Is God only equal to the making of a sky-rocket? Any dull Chinaman can make that. No. Away with the thought; forgive the thought. God, whose every attribute is infinite, is able to evolve man and develop him until his own divine name shall shine upon his forehead—i.e., until man's whole human nature shall incarnate all of God's communicable attributes. God does not thus evolve man in this life; therefore there must be a future life in which man shall be assimilated perfectly to God, and in which God shall work out his ideal in man. God from the very beginning

intended man for a higher destiny than this world; hence next to the thought of God is the thought of the soul's endless life. Better suppose that God would make a world to revolve on its axis, and then strike it out of existence before it had made a quarter of a revolution, than suppose he would allow man to live only through this disappointing fraction of life. If man be allowed to drop out of existence, who is going to praise God and admire his works? The same God-impelling reason which called man into existence is going to keep man in existence forever.

There was a third reason, a reason added to these two reasons, which confirmed us in our faith in a future life for man. It was this: we could find nothing to substitute for it, nothing that could adequately take the place of a faith in the future life. This is the argument of the fitness of things. No other faith can comfort us when our friends leave us in death, or when we are in the presence of the mystery which covers man when his

footsteps have ceased to echo on the familiar roads of this world. The burden of our sorrow in the loss of our friends is that we have lost their society, which was the dearest thing on earth to us. Now the most appreciable consolation which we can offer to our soul to alleviate this burden is that their society is not lost forever—we shall meet again.

“ So long thy power has blessed me, sure it still
 Will lead me on
 O’er moor and fen, o’er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone;
 And with the morn those angel faces smile
 Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.”

Human love was made for eternity. Contrast human love with animal love and you will see this. The animal mother loves her offspring until it is able to take care of itself, and then that natural affection ceases. Not so with the love of the human mother. She may be bent with the weight of fourscore years and ten, and her living son may be more than threescore years, but yet that first natural love, instead of ceasing, is seemingly

growing stronger, and is just as heartily reciprocated. Why is this? Because these loves are as immortal as the soul. I saw something of this maternal love a month ago when I spent a week with my own mother on the other side of the Alleghanies. She is seventy and seven now. When I was coming away she came to me and said, "Son, it seems to me I have done nothing but cry ever since you have been here. But, son, do not think I am not glad to see you." The tears are not tears of sorrow; they are, every one of them, the tears of love and joy." She did not need to tell me that; I knew it by the way she pronounced the word "son," and by the number of times she called me "son." Now that she can no longer use the endearing term "husband," the term "son" is made to carry in it all the love-tones she can command. "Son!" "Son!" That name will ring through my soul as long as I have life; and it will keep saying to me, "The love that hovered over the cradle out-

lived the cradle; it continues loyal to you through your mature manhood, and through your mature manhood it marches on into eternity."

When our friends leave us we do not cease to love them—we love them all the more intensely. Ten years have passed since the farewell; still we love. Twenty years have passed, and still we love. Thirty years have passed, and still we love. If there be no life to come, why this continuing love? Is this love a mockery? Does this love continue that it may be disappointed? This testimony of love is a great thing. It is nature's true index pointing to a reunion in the world of spirits. This love for the friends who have gone, and our faith in a future life, match each other, fit each other, and are two halves of a corresponding whole.

I love to dwell upon this argument for our religion and its glorious teaching, viz., the argument of the fitness of things. The argument of the fitness of things is this: the

Christ offered me in the gospel corresponds precisely to my needs. If my better nature were to construct a Christ, the Christ it constructed would be just such as is the Christ who walks the gospel page. He satisfies my highest ideal. His pure and holy life meets all the demands of my conscience. What he loves my purest affection says ought to be loved. At what he is indignant, the best in me is indignant. When I read the story of his resurrection and the story of his visible ascension into the higher world every instinct in my nature cries out, "Sublime! Sufficient!" The need-be of man—that is what I must have in order to my completeness.

The argument of the fitness of things is this: when God tells us in his divine Book of our immortality, we find, upon thinking his great thoughts over after him and pondering them, that all these glorious things which he has written in his divine Book are written on our own nature. They are all within us—in our loves, in our longings, in our aspirations,

in our ideals, and in our intuitions. Why is this? This is so because God in the creation of man wrote the fact of immortality upon the soul, long before he wrote it upon the page of the inspired Volume. God's speech is in the constitution of things.

If this be so—that the writing of the Book is simply the transcription and interpretation of the writing of God in the immortal soul of man—let us then with confidence open the Book of God and learn how the future life is to be filled up. Let us stand on the sublime heights of Scripture, every one of which is a vantage-point, and look into eternity, and see the white-robed throngs who sing, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

As we now think and reason and deduct, we shall confine ourselves within the lids of the Book. There is no need to surmise, there is no need to speculate. God has revealed more than we can take in.

Take, for example, the one book with which the Bible closes. If we had nothing more than it, we should have enough. In the Apocalypse we have a door opened into the future. The Apocalypse is the climax of revelation. It puts heaven at the end of revelation, just as God puts heaven at the end of every grand life. It is a book which carries us from present conditions to permanent issues. It crowns the story of redemptive agencies with a vision of redemptive achievements. It is the book of finishing touches and of final results. It takes up the broken threads of history and weaves them into the fabric of eternity. It advances our thoughts from the Christ of earth to the Christ of heaven. It carries us over the Jordan of death into the New Jerusalem of the Promised Land, above. What can be grander than the things after death as these are symbolized in this book by white throne, golden harp, spotless robes, and the resplendent city of God with its tree of life and river of life and

streets of gold? What can be grander? Walking by faith amid these things, we inhale the serenity of God, and are filled with the joy of God. We are made partakers of the very life of God; we receive a conscious equipment for the life that now is. The vision of these things keeps us in spiritual equilibrium amid the turmoils of earth. To begin with: those who enter the other life are endowed with a perfect personality. In the soul there will be no sin, no unbalanced passion, no crippled faculty, no mental nor moral nor spiritual infirmity. The soul will be like the being of God. It will be complete. Then the body will correspond to the soul. It too will be perfect. I believe that perpetual youth is the standard of the body in heaven. Heaven will make us all young. There will be no old age there. The resurrection means rejuvenation. Is there any Scripture for this faith? Certainly. In the Scriptures it is said that in heaven "we shall be made equal to the angels." Now, if we

are to be made equal to the angels, we must be made young. Listen to the fullest description of an angel given us in the Bible. It is taken from the story of Christ's resurrection: "And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a *young man* sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment." This is the fullest authentic picture of an angel that we have, and it is a picture of radiant, unchanging youth. Radiant, unchanging youth—that is what we shall have when we are made equal to the angels. Again in the Book it is said that our bodies shall be changed and transfigured and made like unto Christ's resurrection and ascension body: "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Does not that mean the loss of the marks of age and the enjoyment of perpetual youth? The ascension of Christ took place when he was a young man. *He entered heaven at the age of thirty-three.* To be made like him is to be made youthful. It is to be made thirty-three, and to have thirty-three eternized.

Do not let us minimize this view of ourselves in heaven, viz., our enjoyment of a perpetual youth. It is one of the great equipments for occupation there. He is strong for work who has the vigor of youth with the wisdom of maturity. Gaining from century to century in breadth of view, in expansion of soul, in power to achieve great ends, and yet as buoyant and as fresh and as keen in the relish of all things grand as at the start—this is what constitutes the difference between life on earth and life in heaven. Now we lose relish and keenness of enjoyment. In childhood we tingled to our finger-ends with delight in “Robinson Crusoe” and in the “Arabian Knights”; but in old age we do not so tingle when we read these pages. These pages have not changed, we have changed. Here as we look ahead we see our gray selves, wrinkled and bowed down with age. That is our earthly future, and its vision is always before us. But the vision of heaven is a vision with a life full of eternal newness and energy and ardent im-

pulses. What does that mean if not a life full of endless enterprise and eternal occupation?

To begin with, all the symbols used to picture heaven are symbols that set forth great activity and intense life.

There is Isaiah's symbol of the temple. Heaven to him was a vast temple structure with its service. The temple of old was a very hive of life. It took a whole tribe of the nation of Israel to make efficient the temple service. Its choir alone consisted of no less than three thousand trained singers. Isaiah's temple stands for a throng of sacred men busy from morning to night.

There is Christ's symbol of a home. "In my Father's house are many mansions." A home is a busy place; the whole man and the whole woman find play there. The home is crowded with employments and fellowships and pleasures.

There is John's symbol of a great city. A city is the very climax of activity. It is alive

with the perpetual hum of industry. One grand peculiarity of John's celestial city is this: it is a crowded city. In it are multitudes which have poured through its gates on the north and the south and the east and the west, and they have come from every kindred and people and tongue and nation of the earth. They have come from every degree of longitude and every line of latitude. They have come from the pole and the equator, and from under the north star and the Southern Cross. As John speaks of these multitudes he piles numbers upon numbers; "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," "which no man can number." I always like to ring the changes upon these numbers, not simply because they are musical, but because they give me some conception of the vastness of salvation. As I look through the eyes of John, the disciple of love, I learn that the redeemed will constitute the largest part of the souls which God has made. And why not? There is no limit to the

efficacy of Christ's atoning death. It is a pure assumption that the devil's kingdom will far exceed the kingdom of our Lord. The assumption is an insult to the Father-heart of God. It is not true. It conflicts with this declaration of the Book that "where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound." It conflicts with the promise which is made to Christ, who died to save men: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Only a multitude which no man can number can satisfy the soul of Christ. This is John's picture of heaven: an ideal city with nothing gross in it, nothing unspiritual in it, nothing that repels; the home of perfected humanity, the focus of the best; full of social life, brilliant with the flash of all mingled hues and glories; all the inhabitants having their spheres and their appointments and their daily avocations. It is a city with God dwelling in it, where his servants do serve him.

With such a heaven, filled with teeming

crowds, holy men and women, all full of abounding life, what is the logical inference, the common-sense sequence? Why, this: avocations as broad and as varied as the natures and tastes and faculties and endowments and skill of these diverse men and women. Without these they could not be happy. Even here laziness is misery. The most uncomfortable man in this world is the man who has nothing to do. Imagine Paul lazy, or John a do-nothing, or Martha idle, or Peter without enterprise, or the Carpenter of Nazareth with no occupation. The very supposition is a sin against these indefatigable workers of earth. Doom them to a life of inactivity, separate them from great and uplifting purposes, and they would wither out of existence. An arm that never exercises shrivels and grows smaller until it ceases to be an arm. This epitomizes the universal law of all living creatures. When they drop out of activity they cease to be. They are active in the heaven-life, and their activity is

pleasant. Theirs is work; but it is work as free from care and toil and fatigue as is the wing-stroke of the jubilant lark when it soars into the sunlight of a fresh, clear day and, spontaneously and for self-relief, pours out its thrilling carol. Work up there is a matter of self-relief, as well as a matter of obedience to the ruling will of God. It is work according to one's tastes and delight and ability. If tastes vary there, if abilities vary there, then occupations will vary there. There will certainly be no fewer occupations there than there are here. Heaven is in every way broader than earth, not narrower. For example, God's government is there. The administration of government means active agencies. The jasper throne calls for work on thousands of lines.

But I hear some one say, "Are you not making the other life a good deal like this life?" Certainly; like, but better. And why not? We do not lose our personality in death. I shall be I yonder. To me heaven

means only myself with larger opportunity. It means this earth-life grown into perfection. Of this I shall speak in my next chapter, as that is where this point legitimately belongs. Our question now is, What shall this personality which triumphs over death do?—not What is the relation between the earth-life and the heaven-life?

“But you are secularizing heaven,” says another. “Do not do that. It is a sacred place; the life there is a spiritual life.” We have reached an age in Christian thinking when those who lead us in thought teach us that with God and with the consecrated people of God there is no such thing as sacred and secular. The two are one. The only distinction between things is right and wrong. All true life is spiritual, and is worship. Shoemaking is as sacred as preaching. The devout scientist, thinking over after God his great thoughts written in the book of nature, is just as much a minister of the truth as the theologian is who thinks over after

God his great thoughts written in the inspired Book. Tools with Jesus Christ back of them in the carpenter-shop of Nazareth were full of sanctity. Can any one find, even in heaven, a finer purity or a higher sanctity than his? His life on earth, which included the life in the carpenter-shop, was as pure and as sacred as any life ever lived in heaven, God's life itself not excepted. Perhaps Jesus gave himself up to the carpenter's bench among the shavings for fifteen long years for this very purpose, to break up our miserable notion that there is or can be anything more pure or sacred on earth or in heaven than honest work done as a calling of God, and in obedience to the will of God. You want nothing of the secular life in heaven! To the child of God there is no secular life possible anywhere. All true life is sacred. Angels leading Lot by the hand out of the doomed Sodom; ministering to the physical needs of Christ in the mount of temptation and in Gethsemane; rolling away the stone

from the door of the sepulcher; unlocking prison-doors for Peter; carrying the body of Lazarus up the pathway of the skies—do you call that work secular work? Rolling stones, unlocking doors? It certainly is different from striking harps and singing praises; but it is heaven-work. There will be occupations in heaven just as secular as these. There will be ministrations rendered the one to the other. We shall all be ourselves there, and the lines of occupation there will be as varied as we are varied. Our life will be broadened out into the universe.

Let me enumerate just a few of the occupations of heaven by way of illustration.

1. One of the occupations of heaven will be this: fathoming and finishing the postponements of earth.

“What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter.” “Now I know in part: but then shall I know even as I am known.” Thus the Scripture speaks.

You know what the postponements of this

life are, and how many they are. The babe dies in infancy. The postponement which it carries with it into heaven is this: growing into manhood, growing into womanhood. For a season that will be occupation enough for the fair and immortal child. Reaching the full stature of perfect men and women in Christ is a grand work even for heaven.

The development of our faculties—is not that what we men and women desire when we come to the border-line of time and eternity? Further development is possible and within sight. This unfinished development is a postponement which we take with us. The mysteries of this life—all these are problems which we defer to the other world. We shall take these up again in the light of the throne of God. They will not be solved all at once; we shall have to work for their solution, or else get no solution. There is nothing in the Bible to teach us that God in heaven is going to reveal everything at once, in one great, instantaneous revelation,

and leave our faculties to rust out. All we have reason to expect, in the nature of things, is this: better facilities, clarified intellects, and a more far-reaching and far-searching light, and God's standpoint from which to see. Remember, we are never going to become infinite; we are going to remain finite forever.

Here, though we work never so hard, we have no assurance that our perplexing problems will be solved; there we have the assurance that our work will bring the desired solution and make all things plain. The postponements of earth will all be overtaken, worked out to completion, and every dark thing made clear and satisfactory. This long and painful sickness, that sudden and distressing death, yonder trying loss, yonder broken plan, yonder cruel deception—these are to be thoroughly understood. All the black storm-clouds of life are going to be rainbowed, and shot through and through with transfiguring light, and made things of joy and

rejoicing forever. You will know then why you failed and why you lost and why you suffered and why you were circumscribed; for you will find all the things which pertained to you and yours in their proper places in the glorious and all-wise plan of God.

What a comfort there is in this: the postponements of life shall come out all right. What should I do if I did not believe that the afflictions of this life which I cannot fathom are working the peaceful fruits of righteousness? In these, without this belief, there would be nothing but blank, cold, midnight despair. The birds hide themselves from the thunder-riven cloud; but when the light above the cloud begins to creep out on its edges, it calls back the birds. First there is a faint twitter, then the stirring of the branches, and soon the whole forest is full of caroling voices, and the air full of fluttering wings. But what if there were no light above the clouds to shine and produce these results? Were there no hope beyond, our clouds of

sorrow would have no golden edges, and there would be no joy of which to sing. Ah, my soul, thou art in need of the light of God's countenance. The heaven-life will bring that. Thou dost need to feel that God reigns, and that the issue of things is going to be his glory and thy perfection. This also heaven brings, and thou shalt reach it there by following God's light and guidance.

2. Joining in the full and perfect worship of God is one of the occupations of the heaven-life.

I know the jests of Paine and Voltaire and skeptics of their kind ridiculing the harp-business of heaven, and representing the singing there as narrow work and monotonous. All these jests come from narrow, unspiritual lives. The realm of music is not a contracted world. It has assigned tasks that have been equal to the full strength of the most gigantic minds of the human race. There is no one mind equal to the demands of music or to the possibilities of music. Praise

demands the best of two realms, music and poetry. In these two realms have been reared and developed the finest genius and mental power of all time. There are many songs sung in heaven. Let us center our thoughts upon but one song, the song of redemption, and that with this purpose before us—to show the breadth and the variety of the heaven-life which there is in the singing of just that one song.

There are different leaderships in the singing of that song above. Sometimes one company starts it and leads, and sometimes another; and it has different meanings as it is sung under the different leaderships. Each singing brings out a new beauty of redemption, and in this way makes the song deeper and wider and sweeter. The members of each company of the saved look at redemption through their own experience; and as the experiences of all differ, they have separate and distinct reasons for singing the song. Hence I say, Listen to the hosts of heaven

as they contemplate and talk aloud, and sing.

Paul speaks for one company of the redeemed. He speaks for those who persecuted Christ and Christ's people. He says, "We were the veriest of criminals on earth; we were hard-hearted and bitter and unreasonable and cruel. The agonies of our victims were nothing to us; we looked upon them unmoved. The screams from the fires of Smithfield were treated as though they were music. When we forced some weak saint to blaspheme the holy name of Jesus we called that a triumph. Alas, alas! our hands were often dripping red with human blood. The very thought of it now is a horror. Oh, what judgment might not the Christ have justly inflicted upon us! Yet he forgave us and saved us. Our pardon has been read before the universe. We are forever to be looked upon as being in Christ; and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Under the thrill

of this glorious fact, viz., "no condemnation," the whole company of saved persecutors start afresh the song of redemption.

A Roman soldier speaks for another company of the redeemed. He speaks for those who crucified the Christ. He tells over and over in graphic words the whole story of Calvary: the weaving of the crown of thorns, and the use made of it; the fainting under the load of the cross on the way to Golgotha; the driving of the crucifical nails; the cruel mockery and the sarcastic taunts, which, in view of the dignity and deity of Christ, were black blasphemy; the agonies of the Sufferer, the cry of thirst, and the cry of abandonment; the fearful death, and then, after that, the spear-thrust and the gambling over the seamless robe. I hear that Roman soldier say, "If ever there was a foul crime committed on the earth, it was the crime of the crucifixion of the Lord of Glory; and we soldiers committed that crime. No possible punishment could exceed the desert of our

guilt. If Jesus had doomed us to the tortures of the lowest hell, that act of his would have been justice tempered with love. But he doomed us not. He saved us. He used the very blood we shed to wash away the guilt of that murderous blood-shedding. For the crown of thorns which we gave him he has given us a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away; and for the mock purple in which we clad him he has clothed us in celestial robes of white." It is the Roman soldiers' time now to start the song of redemption. And this they do; and as they lead the praises of heaven, they sing as only those who have been forgiven much can sing. Under their leadership the old song is positively made new.

The children of Bethlehem, the children whom Herod slew, speak for another company of the redeemed. They speak for the great child-world in heaven. "Oh, what a wonderful salvation is ours! We can tell a story different from all the other stories told

in this celestial land. None have been saved as we have been saved. We have been saved from actual sin. There are no regrets in our experience, no harrowing recollections, no place and need for repentance in our lives. Like the unfallen angels who have kept their first estate, our lives have been only an unfolding of holiness and love. It has been all heaven with us, no earth; nothing but heaven. Our only consciousness has been the consciousness of these holy scenes in which we are now living. We have been saved from all the soil of evil and from all the foils of the tempter. We have been saved from the sorrows and separations of earth. We have been saved from all alienation from God. We have been saved from being the persecutors of Christians and from being the crucifiers of the Christ. Here we are, gathered from all lands; we have come from the darkness and degradation of heathendom, as well as from the lands of Christendom. We represent all races, all tribes, and all kingdoms

of the earth ; and as so many of mankind die in infancy and in childhood, we outnumber all the other distinctive companies of the saved. Here we have always been, and here we have been growing, like the tree of life, in an environment that is perfect. Every faculty of our being is intact. Every sympathy of our soul is with God. Our entire personality carries in it the unmarred image of Jesus Christ which was given to us at the beginning. No salvation is more worthy of a song than our salvation. We were saved early and saved wholly. We were so saved that salvation has been the only thing we have ever known."

Now is the opportunity for the child-world in heaven to start the song of redemption and to lead it. This they do, and there is no other rendering of the song of redemption equal to this rendering under their leadership.

But why continue further this analysis of the heavenly singers? Our analysis has been continued far enough to show that the simple

singing of the one song of redemption affords an occupation that is varied and broad and grand.

3. Cultivating holy fellowships and renewing and developing human loves is another occupation of the heaven-life. We have Christ's words for this. He says, "Many shall come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." By the very constitution of our nature we require company. We have been made to enjoy nothing alone. We are contagious creatures, and catch inspiration from one another. On this account we are essential to one another. Hence there could be no heaven for us if we were isolated from our kind.

The question is often asked, Shall we know one another in heaven? And it is asked sometimes with anxiety, Shall I have fellowship with my friend who on earth was the very soul of my soul? Yes, you shall. So

certain is the fact that the question is almost foolish. It should never have had an existence. Our love for God shall continue; why not all other pure and kindred loves? To answer this question in the negative would imply a destruction which is quite opposite to the dealings of God with our nature. Memory would have to be abridged. Vision would have to be impaired. There would have to be a loss or a paralysis of our affectional nature. Something would have to fall out of our mental constitution before our friends could fall out of our life. If our friends fell out of our life, why not all remembrance and thought of our salvation and of our Saviour? The question is absurd. Certain physical relations will cease there, but all soulful relations will continue, and these will be filled with joyful reminiscences which will keep us perpetually in the spirit and mood of praise. Shall we know our friends there? What is the significance of immortality if it means forgetfulness? How forgetfulness

narrows this life! Of what use is immortality if we lose our identity? How can this life be a preparation for the next life if death obliterates all memory of it? The question should never have been raised. Pray that you may never grow away from those who have gone before, or out of sympathy with them.

4. Receiving and executing sublime commissions is another occupation of the heaven-life. We know that this is the way angels are occupied. The angels work. They receive and execute sublime commissions. They blow the trumpets of judgment; they pour out the vials of wrath; they roll the wheels of providence; they hurl thunder-bolts. Michael is the leader of the hosts of heaven; the champion of the good against the evil; the moral backbone of the upper world. The record reads, "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels, and overcame them." Gabriel is the pacific harbinger of glad tidings and the inspirer of heavenly

thought. It was he who brought God's word to Daniel and Zacharias and Mary. As it is with the angels, so is it with the saints. They too receive sublime commissions from God. They sometimes take far-away journeys for God. And they go in companies. Moses and Elijah once came all the way from heaven to earth on the Lord's errand. That was wonderful; but it is only a single item from the great book of history, as history is made in heaven.

They shall receive commissions to serve one another. Abraham is commissioned to embosom Lazarus. Abraham, who is away up in the shining ranks, helps Lazarus, who has just entered heaven. When Lazarus needs some one to talk for him, Abraham does the talking. An old inhabitant of heaven, he exercises a fatherly care over the new-comer. He will not send Lazarus on any useless errand, nor allow any one else to send him. He will not permit him to do anything out of accord with his exalted state.

Thus those who are there get from and give to one another. It is there as it is here. We get from one another and incorporate one another here ; i.e., we take into our personality the influences which emanate from one another. You might as well try to separate from the flower or from the ripened fruit the sunshine of summer as try to abstract from our characters and lives all that we owe to the influence and the molding fellowships of our friends. Both in heaven and on earth we make one another.

If what we have now set before our minds be the truth, what grandeur of destiny is ours as the people of God! What a life awaits us beyond!—a life broad and full and grand and stirring. The thought of it is exhilaration. All legitimate fear is taken away from death. If this be what is beyond awaiting us, no one need be afraid to die. Dying is only knocking at the golden gate. It is really only beginning to live.

No wonder Paul said, "For me to die is gain." Dying to him was just as desirable as living. In the midst of his life he said, "I have a desire to depart." This was his aspiration when he was in midlife and had all his faculties, and when his vitality was at high tide. That aspiration never left him, for in old age he said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

If we have reached the truth, then death is a triumph, an ascension, a coronation, an enthronement, that the redeemed may reign forever with God and Christ.

If we have reached the truth, then it is well, eternally well, with our friends who

have left us, and we would not call them back. We shall meet them again and take up life with them anew, freed from all imperfection; we shall live with them in the life-giving presence of Jesus Christ forever and forever.

III


“THEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN,
BE YE STEADFAST, UNMOVABLE, ALWAYS
ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD,
FORASMUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YOUR
LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.”—
1 COR. xv. 58.

SYLLABUS

Paul sets forth the "therefore" of the heaven-life.—This "therefore" begets realism and makes our subject practical.—God a utilitarian both in nature and in grace.—Illustrations of this.—Two questions: 1. What are the practical conclusions embodied in Paul's "therefore"? 2. What are the works of God in which we should abound?—A large vision of the heaven-life should stimulate man to a large and grand earth-life.—Bunyan's pilgrims looking through the field-glass at the Celestial City.—Our vision in Christ.—Our earth-life and its results go to make up our heaven-life.—Illustration of the musical instructor and his favorite pupil.—Works in which we should abound: 1. The building up of a self worthy of a forever. 2. The formation of the fellowships of love. 3. The filling up of the ranks of heaven.—The soul in the hands of God as a violin in the hands of the master musician.

III

THE "THEREFORE" OF THE HEAVEN-LIFE, OR THE INFLUENCE OF THE HEAVEN- LIFE ON THE EARTH-LIFE

HE "therefore" of the heaven-life is introduced to us by the chief of the apostles. It forms the practical application of Paul's great treatise upon the future life which fills the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "*Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

The treatment of Paul's "*therefore*" requires me to make this chapter of my book practical. While I say this I do not mean to

cast reflections upon the preceding chapters by insinuating that they are not practical. They are practical. In this regard no one chapter has the advantage of another. The other chapters were intended to produce and develop and strengthen faith and joy and courage and comfort and hope and vision; this chapter is intended to produce work—work preparatory to the future life: man-building, woman-building, character-building, heaven-building.

I wish to say this: While we have tried to get a clearer view of that fathomless eternity whereinto so many dear possessions of time have dropped despite our imploring eyes, and while we have tried to follow our friends who have taken passage from the mortal to the immortal, still we have introduced no speculation into our thinking. Listening to the sweet voice of Jesus the Christ, mellow and deep, as it floats down and over the nineteen centuries of experience and new meaning, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor

and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;" saying, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also"—listening to the voice of the Christ uttering these words, and then striving with all the power of our mind to get out of these words all that Christ put into them—that is not speculation. Asking over again the questions which have been addressed to all the masters of thought by all the ages—that is not speculation. The questions which all the ages have asked, and still keep asking, are questions which pertain to the essential well-being of human nature. They have been put into the mind of man by God himself, and they have been put there for the purpose of stimulating thought and of opening a path-

way to the highest and the most ennobling faith. Reverent ignorance is not religion. To find out the things that harmonize with enlightened reason—that is not speculation. To collect and arrange in order the corroborations of God's wonders in nature—that is not speculation. To build out of the unswerving justice of God an argument in favor of the adjudication of things in another life, things which are clearly not adjudicated in this life—that is not speculation. The future life with its equalization of things is a magnificent moral relief to our consciences and to our feelings. There is an innate conviction that man's virtues should be rewarded somewhere. If at death there be nothing more than the body going to dust, then the reward of virtue (which has up to this point failed of a reward) is dust and nothing more. Tennyson puts the thought in a fine way :

“ My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live forevermore ;
Else earth is darkness to the core,
And dust and ashes all that is.”

To open the Book and gather and arrange in order what the Scriptures say about heaven—that is not speculation. Reading human nature and consulting our deepest intuitions and reducing these to plain Anglo-Saxon—that is not speculation. Searching for and ascertaining the fitness of things relative to the future life, the things that fit God as a perfect worker, the things that fit man with his wonderful endowments as a son of God—that is not speculation. All these things lead directly up to a practical "*therefore*," and this practical "*therefore*" indissolubly links the future life with the present life. These are the things with which the prior chapters deal, and they deal with these things in order to beget realism with regard to the future life, and a faith to inspire and compel man to spend this present life in such a noble way as to make it a preparation for the future life. Certainly there can be nothing more practical than that.

Of all the questions with which we have to

deal, there is no more practical question than this: What faith should I hold as I front the future? To me it is self-evident that the faith to which I should give lodgment should be a faith as high and as broad as possible; a faith in harmony with the glorious character of God; a faith accordant with the highest views of man; a faith that will give dignity to the life I am now living, and will fill it with divine impulses, and will purify it and glorify it; a faith that will comfort me in bereavement and throw a bow of hope over the grave. I should accept only of that view, theory, hypothesis, which will produce the highest type of life. Anything that degrades me or limits me or makes me grovel or permits me to grovel is false and unworthy of me, whether it belong to science or religion or business or pleasure. Away with everything that takes from man his elastic and expansive power of soul, or that robs him of his highest hopes, or that strikes out of him all enthusiasm. I believe in golden threads

and silver threads and silken threads; and I believe in that faith which as a loom can weave all these threads into the fine fabric of a beautiful life.

I wish to make this point: that in all of his works and in all of his revelations God is intensely practical; and I wish to call attention to the fact that the "*therefore*" of the heaven-life is a fine proof and illustration of this point. Every spiritual entity, every material atom, every living structure, every thought of revelation, has its part to play in the universe and its end to serve. We know our end; the lower creations do not know theirs.

Naturalists instruct us here. They tell us that when we pronounce the least thing in nature useless, we express the conclusion of our own ignorance and not the facts of the divine plan. Darwin says, "The most insignificant insect or reptile is of much consequence, and has a mighty influence in the economy of nature. Even the earthworm,

though in appearance so despicable, is a most important link in nature's chain, and if destroyed and lost would not only make a lamentable chasm, but pull down many other parts of the system with it." Henry Drummond, in his last work, takes us out into the world of color, and discourses to us on the ornamental case in which the beetle folds its wings, and on the brilliant dust so artistically laid on the wings of the butterfly, and shows us how practical is the divine wisdom as seen even in these. He takes us into the world of flowers, and discourses in the same way upon the beauty and the perfume there. The beautiful tints are painted by the divine hand upon the flowers for the purpose of attracting the bee to the feast of honey in the heart of the flower. There are insects which love the dusk; they belong to the night; they cannot see; to attract them the night-flowers load the darkness with their sweet perfumes. We look at beauty in nature as though it were intended only for the passing

glance of our eye ; but it has a far wider and a more practical mission than that ; it has a utilitarian mission : it helps forward the very growth and life of nature. It introduces the insect-world into the glorious fullness of the provisions of nature.

What we say of the works of God in nature we can say of the truth and of the doctrines of revelation. Truth has been given for a practical object. It is intended that by and through it we may have life, and life more abundantly. It is a girdle to bind up and strengthen the loins for active work. Paul's teaching is significant here ; he teaches us that the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ is " the doctrine according to holiness." This is a remarkable phrase which he uses, viz., " the doctrine according to holiness." He means that every doctrine of the gospel contains in it the principles and germs of duty and holiness, and that when it is properly believed it always develops into a life of practical obedience to God's law. The doc-

trine of this self-contained chapter in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, which gives us the “therefore” of the heaven-life, is an example and a striking illustration. The chief of the apostles, with his giant mind, has been setting forth by argument and illustration the sublime doctrine of the resurrection of the body and its future glory. He has been dealing with the whole of the future life. In his marvelous treatise he not only sweeps away objections, but piles thought upon thought in massive grandeur, till he has risen ineffably above all the philosophies of the day, and has carried us up to a vivid conception of a state which it is our hope and aim eternally to realize. Then by means of a practical conclusion he hangs upon this magnificent doctrine a life of active duty. By the link of a “*therefore*” he suspends to one of the grandest abstract conceptions that has ever engaged the thoughts of man the obligation of religious activity, and makes the doctrine a motive power to quicken us to all

details of Christian work. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

It is like what we often see in our large factories and mills. In the engine-room we find ponderous machinery in stately motion; long piston-rods and massive shafts moving with a majestic grandeur, and by the very force of their movements inspiring a certain feeling of awe, and suggesting the inquiry, What great object is it all intended to serve? When, however, we move into the next building, or climb to the next floor, there we find all this huge force brought down to a working point. It is twisting a thread or driving a shuttle. So the Apostle brings down the grand doctrine of the resurrection to a working, practical point.

Or it is as we sometimes see in science. Take Sir Humphry Davy and Liebig in the laboratory, and you will find them engaged

in an endeavor to penetrate the arcana of nature, to force her to yield to their persevering inquiries her most mysterious secrets, and thus, by adding discovery to discovery, to build up an exact system of scientific knowledge. Yet the one utilizes his discoveries so as to teach the housewife how she may most economically boil or bake or preserve her fruits, while the other uses his vast attainments to show the farmer how to analyze his soil or more perfectly enrich his crops. Precisely in a similar way Paul gives practical point to the doctrine of the resurrection, when from it he deduces this as a conclusion: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Paul concludes his treatise in the same way that Peter concludes his Second Epistle. After setting forth the glorious coming of Christ and the dissolution of this world, Peter closes with this exhortation: "Wherefore,

beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

There are two questions upon which I wish to dwell in this chapter. They are these:

1. What are the practical conclusions embodied in Paul's "therefore"?

2. What are the works of God in which he exhorts us to abound?

What are the practical conclusions embodied in Paul's "therefore"?

The first practical conclusion embodied in the word "therefore" is this:

1. *A true and large vision of the heaven-life should stimulate man to a large and grand earth-life.*

The two lives act and react upon each other. *That* broadens *this*; *this* can and *this* ought to broaden *that*. You know how man reasons in the presence of eternity. He

reasons thus: "Is eternity mine? Then I live for eternity. Eternity wonderfully enlarges my life. It means plans to be carried over the line and to be completed in the beyond. Tell me that there is no hereafter and you narrow the circumference of this life. Tell me that my life is bounded and that I am a creature of 'now,' and that moment there is an awful shrinkage in my aspirations and expectations, and consequently an awful shrinkage in my purposes and enterprises. I must attempt nothing so large that I cannot finish it before the sun goes down, and I must desire nothing that this life cannot bestow. I must live as a poor, timid, cramped, crippled, limited, temporary thing should live. To live thus is living according to my nature. But if eternity is mine I am not a limited, crippled, cramped, temporary thing. My life now may carry the grub-aspect, or it may be in the form of a seed; but within me is the beautiful creature with wings, or the many-

tinted flower. The wonder of the grub is that somewhere within it lurks the splendor of coloring and life of the golden butterfly; the wonder of the seed is that within it lies buried the bud and the blossom; the wonder connected with me is that wrapped up in me, under many a covering, under many a fold, are the everlasting powers of a son of God."

The doctrine of immortality vindicates itself by what it produces. It refines and ennobles man. It defines his personality, and intensifies it, and develops it. It gives his personality two worlds as a field for its thought and action. It carries man onward in life with the bound of enthusiasm. Bunyan tells us that when the two pilgrims of his great allegory looked through the perspective glass of the shepherds they were exhilarated and equipped anew for life; his words are: "As they held the glass and brought it to bear on the gates of the Celestial City, their hands did shake; yet they thought they saw something like a gate opening into the city, and

also some of the glory of the place; and they went forward singing on their way."

Everywhere in human life the best work is done when the worker has a fine vision of the future. Under a fine vision man is at his best. When a man's future has slipped into the past, and when all his interests lie behind him, that man's life has lost its vigor and value. When a man's present is all that he can see, and all for which he has any care, the very possibilities of life are struck with paralysis. It is the vision of something beyond that quickens and feeds our impulses, and that inspires us to heroic endeavor. The child must see a glowing manhood or womanhood calling it on. The mother in the home must see her dear ones, for whom she thinks and labors there, the possessors of health, growing up into higher capacities, because of her thoughtfulness and fidelity to their interests. The tasks of a mother in the home are an endless round; they are always exacting and often irritating; seldom bulking large

enough to thrill the nerves, and never commanding the inspiration of novelty. She would fail through very weariness did she not see that every one in the home needed with a sore need just what she is daily doing with laborious patience. She knows that she is making the future of the home, and the future of her boys and girls.

Experts in art, who have studied carefully the beauties and wonders of the great cathedrals of the world, tell us that the men who built them did the perfect work which they did because of their vision of the future of their work. This gave them a lofty consecration to their work. Not for pay, nor for mere bread, did the chisels chip and the hammers strike and the trowels ring. The workmen consciously worked for God. God's name was writ into every stone they lifted into place. God's glory flashed from every column as it rose in stately symmetry. Before the toiler glowed the vision of the finished pile, a house of holy sanctuary, filled

with the solemn awe of the divine presence. Those were the heroic days of labor when work meant worship, when the toil of the day was consciously linked to the travail of eternity, and when the tasks of time were wrought by the power of an endless life.

We all need quickening, something to make us enthusiastic relative to our possibilities and potentialities. We all need to be commanded by something higher and better than ourselves; for we fall below our possibilities and lose worth and heart unless so commanded. This is the reason God puts us under the stimulus of success, and reveals to us our possible destiny.

Does God do that? He does. Where? How? In whom? In Jesus Christ our pattern. Jesus Christ reveals me to myself. He came to this earth to do this. In Jesus Christ man is a success. To be an example of success he took upon him our nature and lived his human life. In and by him our immortal destiny is set into the light. I call

upon you to see how clear he has made man's immortality. No one thing did he teach more frequently than this: that all who believe in him have eternal life. He conjugates eternal life in the present tense. We enter upon it the moment we believe. He teaches that death is the gateway into the fullest joys of eternal life. He affirms the existence of heaven. He affirms that his friends, even when their bodies are in the grave, are still in existence; and he calls Lazarus back from eternity to prove the truth of what he says. He himself dies, is buried, and rises again from the grave, and ascends visibly to heaven. Years after his ascension he comes to the gate of heaven and allows his glory to flash over the way to Damascus, and calls down to Paul. All this is explanatory of what death is, and a demonstration of the reality of eternity. All this is unmistakably clear. How clear it is is evident from the effects which it has produced, and from the sway it has held over the minds of great Christendom.

We are immortal, therefore we should live like immortals. If a man is to die like a beast, why should he live like an angel? What is the use of character to a being whose end is extinction? Why should I live an unselfish life, suffer and sacrifice for those around me, if at any moment they may become nothing more than a handful of offensive clay? How can I feel reverence and love for humanity which is only a mere temporary thing? The uplift of humanity costs; it means a long course of self-denial and toil, on my part and on others' part. Why pay this price for creatures which have no to-morrow? It is too great. Give me the assurance that the life of man is an endless life—i.e., an indissoluble life—and the cost is reasonable. The uplift of immortal creatures is cheap at any cost. When a man's life is looked upon as an endless life, then it becomes the thing most to be revered in the universe except God.

There is a second practical thought in the

"therefore" of the heaven-life; it is closely related to our first thought. It is this:

2. *Our earth-life and its results go to make up our heaven-life.*

Our works here are not in vain in the Lord. They do not pass out of existence. They continue, and we carry them with us over the line. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." If this means anything it means that the present is the seed of the future. The *now* makes the *then*. The *here* makes the *hereafter*. If the two worlds are thus closely related, if this world makes that world, then we can know what we shall be there by taking cognizance of what we are here. In crossing the Jordan our individuality is not going to be destroyed; there will be nothing taken from us but sin and sorrow.

Look at the men who people the Bible, and see them on this side of the Jordan and

see them on that side. You will find an exact correspondence. There are Moses and Elijah. On this side what were they? Prominent men, leading men. On that side they are just the same—prominent men, leading men. When delegates were wanted to represent heaven on the mountain of transfiguration, such was their prominence and such was their acknowledged leadership in heaven that they were the delegates chosen. There are Abraham and Lazarus. Abraham on earth was an active man, a man who blessed others; for of him it is written, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Lazarus was a quiet man, a man of passive virtues. He could do nothing but lie at the gate of Dives and suffer. These two men are pictured for us by the hand of Christ as they are in heaven. And how about their characteristics there? Why, they are precisely the same as their characteristics on earth. Abraham there is a man of active virtues, and Lazarus there is a man

of passive virtues. The picture is Lazarus in Abraham's bosom; Lazarus passive, resting upon Abraham; Abraham active, ensphering his new-come friend, and actively protecting him from the suggestions of Dives, who cries up to heaven demanding service from him. The same men who people earth people heaven; and they take with them to that world the same personalities which they build up here. Therefore, says Paul, "Build into your personality here the things that will match the life there." "Seek on earth the guidance of those high and cardinal affections and principles which are the imperishable lights of heaven."

This is the case as I conceive it. This life is the childhood of which yonder life is the manhood. As the childhood is, so shall the manhood be. We are making our heaven now. By building into ourselves principles, by creating in our souls holy tastes, we are rearing the walls of jasper, and paving the streets of gold, and beautifying the eternal

mansions. I believe heaven to be just this : a new setting of the principles we are mastering, and working into our personalities, and embodying in our works and character, here and now. By doing well our fragmentary duties day by day we are getting ready to sing the new song of heaven.

This story is told in connection with a celebrated musician who had a large number of pupils. It was his purpose at the end of a specified time to give a grand concert, at which his favorite pupil was to be the conspicuous figure. There was one among the others to whom was given fragmentary work. No part of his instruction seemed to have the least connection with any other part. It was dull work, but he practised upon the dull fragments and fought discouragement. He did his best and forced the whole man into the work. When the day of celebration came he was chosen as the favorite pupil. He felt that he did not know a single complete piece of music. Tremblingly he took

his place at the instrument; but when the score which he was to play was placed before him he throbbed and thrilled with delight to find that the completed work was made up of the fragments which he had mastered, and which were now perfectly arranged. This gave him courage, and so he performed in such a way as deservedly to win the plaudits of the great audience. We are that musician. When we go hence we shall find that the fragmentary Christian earth-life, with its principles and its loves and its Christ-spirit, is that out of which heaven is made. Heaven is the holy life of earth glorified and perfectly arranged and grandly transfigured.

I have now reached the second question with which we have to deal. It is this:

What are the works of God in which Paul exhorts us to abound?

They are those which have relation to the future life. They are the works of which it can be said, "They are not in vain in the Lord." They are the works which shall

stand and remain forever. It is with this *forever* work that we are to fill the present.

If asked to enumerate some of these works, I should state this as a first work:

1. *The building up of a self worthy of a forever.*

This is what Jesus Christ did while he was on earth. He spent his life here building up a humanity that was worthy to take possession of the majesty at the right hand of the throne of God.

If this same personality of earth is to enter the heaven-life, then Abraham must at once look after what he is going to be, and so must Lazarus, and so must Moses, and so must Elijah, and so must you, and so must I. We must begin to adjust ourselves now to the heavenly delights and to the heavenly services. We must build into our present personalities the things that are eternal in their substance. There are things which are eternal and there are things which are only temporal. Love, purity, the sense of justice,

hope, truthfulness, sincerity, the things that develop a fine character—these live forever. The Christ-like things are the forever things; and these are the things we should build into our personality. We must find our ideal in Christ. Our ideal in him is, not merely to reach an escape from sin—that is negative; it is far more than that; it is to incarnate all the virtues, and to be positive in holiness, and become consciously like God. It is wonderful how grand is our destiny as set forth by this ideal: that a man, a child of the dust, may rise and grow and unfold as the plant unfolds from its lowest green leaf to its highest tinted blossom, until his nature becomes such that it merges, as it were, into the divine nature, and thinks as God thinks, and loves as God loves, and does as God does; and does all this from its own essential character and choice. When a man reaches that ideal, then his personality matches heaven. He has a white soul for the white robes, and a spirit of praise for the harp of

gold, and a self thoroughly under a divine government to wear the eternal crown. It is impossible to make up a character and thrust it upon a man at death. Character grows. It is a development. It grows from the inside out. Character is our inner self brought out to visibility.

The works in which we are to abound are :

2. *Works which pertain to the fellowships of love.*

The question has been asked, Shall we take up our old fellowships in heaven? Shall we renew our human loves there? Let not that question trouble any one. If we are ourselves in heaven we certainly shall. The question with us should be how to use this life so as to perpetuate and make the most of our human loves. Our anxiety should be this: so to live during our separation from our friends, between their going and our going, that we may not grow apart from them. Old men and women who were close comrades when young find after the

separation of almost a lifetime, when they come together again, that they are comrades no longer. They are surprised to see how thoroughly they have grown apart. They feel no aversion, but there is no common longing between them. It is our duty here to keep in touch with those who are in heaven; to follow as closely as we can, day by day, the heaven-life.

My fellow-men, if we wish to perpetuate the friendships of earth in the future life we had better see to it that we bring into our friendships of earth the things that last, the forever things, the things that belong to heaven. How are you united to your friends by your side? By what bond? By Christian bonds? Or by material interests only? What do you talk about? Heavenly things or only earthly things? What have you in common upon which to base a recognition in heaven? Are the things which you have in common only horses and carriages and business and pleasures and fashion? These

things are not for heaven; they do not come within sight of eternity. If these are the only things you have in common, you have not the first atom of material for a friendship in heaven. You have nothing that will make you want to meet in heaven. If these earthly things are your all, there is as yet no heaven in you and no heaven for you. How can there be? The message of the gospel for you to-day is, Begin at the beginning. Get God and the things of God into your loves and your friendships, and then your human loves will be eternal.

The works in which we are to abound are :

3. *Works which pertain to the filling up of the numbers and the ranks of heaven.*

This was the work in which Christ engaged. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. For completing the numbers of heaven he formulated the gospel with its glad invitation, and died for the sins of the world upon the cross. For the same end Paul dedicated to God his wonderful gifts and spent his whole

life in missionary service. He looked upon saving sinners as a work that was not in vain in the Lord. And those whom he saved he called his crown and his joy in the great day of the Lord's coming.

Where shall we find men to save? Everywhere. Men crowd our streets; begin with them. That is the way the apostles of Jesus did—they began with the first men they came across. And did they succeed in making them ready for heaven? They did. Turn and read the letters which Peter wrote to his converts, and you will see how well the apostles succeeded. You know what these people were outwardly and in the estimation of the world. Some of them were slaves; nearly all were despised by their fellow-men. They were homeless. They were persecuted. They were strangers in the world. Peter saw what they were inwardly. He saw them in their spiritual standing. He saw their souls, and judged them by their soul-life. And addressing them with this aspect before

him, he says to them, "The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." He tells them that they are born of an incorruptible seed to a new life, and are made "partakers of the divine nature." And then he declares to them that they have "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, reserved in the heaven for them." It is perfectly marvelous what language he uses in describing them; and the beauty of it all is that they are just what he takes them to be, made such by the ennobling power of the gospel which he preached to them. The gospel made them meet for heaven by teaching them that theirs was the power of an endless life. It brought them face to face with their immortality, and thus made them realize their possibilities.

In closing this chapter I wish simply to put these queries to my readers:

Are your faces turned heavenward? Have you begun to adjust yourself to the life to come? If the Lord came to you and said, "Your mansion is ready," could you say,

"Lord, I also am ready"? What have you sent before you into heaven? What have you in you and with you to take to heaven? My fellow-men, do you know what we need in order to be made ready for heaven? We need to put ourselves completely into the hands of God by an unreserved surrender, and let him call out by his truth and his love all the heavenly things which are potentially packed into our souls.

Standing on the summit of Mount Holyoke last summer, I met a friend with whom I discussed the beauty and grandeur of the scene. We concluded that nature was beautiful because nature yielded itself wholly to God without the least resistance to his will. And we concluded that if man would only let God have his way in his human life, God would make him more beautiful even than nature. My friend told this story to illustrate what the soul of man is when in the hand of God and when wrought upon by God's grace. It is a story of Ole Bull. Years ago he was

wandering through the American forests. In the midst of the forest there stood a hut occupied by a hermit who had formerly been a man in public life; but becoming tired of the selfishness of his fellows, he withdrew from them, and built himself a little hut in the heart of the wilderness. As Ole Bull pushed the door open and stepped in, he looked upon the white beard of the old hermit and wondered. On the wall of the hut there hung a violin. He asked, "What is that?" The hermit said, "That is my violin." "Can you play?" "Well, I reckon I can. I got that thirty-five years ago in London." "Would you mind playing a little?" "Certainly not." He took the violin down and began to play as requested. The poor thing wailed "God Save the King," and shrieked "My Country, 'tis of Thee," and "Home, Sweet Home." As he lowered the violin with a self-satisfied air, Ole Bull asked, "Do you think I could learn to play?" "Well, I do not know about you; it takes years, but I

learned." Ole Bull took the violin and picked his way over the strings with a master's sweep. He then poured his soul into it. He played, as only he could play, "God Save the King," and "My Country, 'tis of Thee," and the "Carnival of Venice," and "Home, Sweet Home," until the hills of Norway lived again before his own mind, and until the streets of New York lived again before the mind of the banished politician. But what is a violin? Nothing in its making but wood and strings; but a violin in the hands of Ole Bull is the master-instrument of the century. What am I? What are you? Nothing in ourselves—inclining toward a sensual life; but when our soul lies on the shoulder of God's power, when it is fingered by the omnipotent hand of God's wisdom, when it is swept by the sweep of God's saving grace, there comes from it the music of heavenly worship and heavenly aspiration and heavenly living. Soul, surrender thyself to God to be saved, to be transfigured, and to be glorified.

IV


“IF ANY MAN’S WORK ABIDE WHICH HE HATH BUILT THEREUPON, HE SHALL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANY MAN’S WORK SHALL BE BURNED, HE SHALL SUFFER LOSS: BUT HE HIMSELF SHALL BE SAVED; YET SO AS BY FIRE.”

SYLLABUS

Our earth-life set forth by the parable of a building.—Put to the test of fire.—Principles which are fire-proof.—The negatives of heaven the same to all; the positives unequal.—Differences among the saved do not clash with the doctrine of justification by faith or salvation by grace.—Based upon the argument of probability and upon the sameness of the laws which govern the eternal life in this world and in the world to come.—The Scriptures furnish the chief argument.—Four differences enumerated.—Practical points: 1. There is something beyond being saved possible to us, and we should seek that something. A high degree of glory is possible. Graces which become that high degree. The chorus of graces. Illustration from "Hiawatha." Abraham and Lot as types. Lot in the throne-room of God admiring the crown he might have worn.—2. The something possible beyond salvation is alike available to all. Moses and Elijah and Lazarus as illustrations. The career of the Christ a revelation. His attainment of the highest throne in heaven a symbol and a type.

IV

DIFFERENCES AMONG THE REDEEMED IN THE HEAVEN-LIFE, OR THE INFLU- ENCE OF THE EARTH-LIFE UPON THE HEAVEN-LIFE

HE Scripture voices the subject of this chapter in these words: "*If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*"

In this Scripture the Apostle instructs us by means of a parable. His parable sets forth human life. According to his parable human life is a building. We can make this building noble or ignoble. We can build it out of hay and wood and stubble—that is,

out of mere expedients and superstitions and errors and worldly maxims; or we can build it out of gold and silver and precious stones—that is, out of sterling principles and spiritualities and moral virtues. We can make it earthly in character or we can make it heavenly in character. A life earthly in character is one that centers around self and delights in the things of sense; a life heavenly in character is one that centers in Christ and delights in love and purity and worship.

The parable of the Apostle is directed to Christians. It is confined to the regenerated life lived on earth by those who are described as being “in Christ.” Christians are taught that they are immortal creatures, and that they have the power of breathing immortality into all that they do; therefore the life which they build here determines their eternal standing in the eternal world. The outreach of our earthly life sweeps into the heavenly life. Science tells us that when a little child flings its arms out into the air in play, it starts

vibrations in the atmosphere that circle out in ever-widening rings until they touch the most distant world on the uttermost rim of creation. Wonderful is the outreach of a physical act; but just as wonderful is the outreach of a moral and spiritual act. Its influence goes out and on through the endless cycles of eternity. Our eyes may not discern it, but God's microscopic eyes do.

The eternal influence of the life which we live in time—this is what the Apostle strives to impress upon our consciousness. He says to us, "By the life you are now living you are making your eternity. Your life there will be continuous with your life here. If you build the transient and chaffy and worthless into your life, you will lose all your toil in the day when God tests your work with fire; but if you build into your life the everlasting, that will abide, and you will take it with you into eternity and enjoy it forever."

Christians are all building upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ, and so far that is



good; but there is something more to be looked after than the foundation: the super-structure which we rear upon the one true and grand foundation must be looked after. The man who builds a good house upon a poor foundation will lose his house: the winds will always beat down the house that is built on the sand, no matter how well the house may have been built. Men need to be taught this; but men need also to be taught that he who builds a poor house on a good foundation will lose his house just as certainly. Foundation and house, both must be good. This only is the condition of permanence. The Christian life which we build must correspond with Christ, the foundation upon which we build it, else as Christians we shall suffer eternal loss.

My object in making this Scripture the key-note of this chapter is the same which the Apostle had when he uttered it. What Paul sought I seek. I seek to exalt the life which we are now living. I seek to impress

this fact upon our minds: that we are constantly building. We are constantly doing something. We are either conserving time or wasting time. We are apt to think that we have done nothing, and that that is the worst thing that can be said of us. But this is not true. That is not the worst thing that can be said of us. We have been doing something, and we have been doing it poorly. We have been piling up fuel for the burning. It is impossible for any one to be a cipher, even for a single day.

I seek to show that there are principles which can no more stand the searching judgment of God than stubble can stand the fire. They are destined to become ashes. With these worthless principles scores and hundreds of Christians are building. I seek to substitute fire-proof principles for these moral combustibles. The true are the fire-proof. It is not possible for the fires of judgment to consume one atom of faith or of love or of loyalty to Christ. I wish to ring the changes upon

the coming judgment to which our works as Christians shall be submitted, and the various decisions which shall be pronounced upon Christians in this judgment. I distinguish between the judgment of the person of a Christian and the judgment of the works of a Christian. As a person the Christian is judged in Christ and is declared free from condemnation. This judgment is over. In this judgment all Christians are alike ; but in the judgment of works, which is yet future, Christians are not alike, because their works differ. They use their saved life differently ; they spend the grace which they received from God differently ; they bring forth altogether different products from the use of God's Book and God's Holy Spirit and God's house ; and this must differentiate them in the day of trial when God tests their work ; this must differentiate them throughout all eternity.

My fellow-men, there must be something wherewith to ply and spur Christians and

make them faithful. And there is. It is the coming day of trial, with its irresistible fires, when dwarfed and inconsistent Christians shall barely escape with their lives from the houses which they have built, and when they shall be compelled to look upon their labors as mere ash-heaps. See them! There they are. They stand amid loss—loss of life-work; loss of self-possibility; loss of cherished hopes; loss of arduous toil. See them! There they are. They stand amid loss—loss of the gracious approval of the Master which is given their neighbors who have built according to the mind of the Master. As they contrast their ash-heaps with the standing palaces of their neighbors, which grandly come forth from the trial of fire, and as they see the glitter and sheen of their neighbors' gold and silver and precious stones, methinks they will feel regret through all eternity. Ash-heaps versus eternal palaces; the transitory results of bad building versus the eternal results of good building—these

contrasts must make a difference among the builders; a difference in their lives and in their feelings and in their eternities. Consider this, ye Christians who have possessions, but do nothing; who have great influence, but never exert it for great ends; who have talents for service, but let them lie unimproved; who are marked by practical inconsistencies, by questionable habitudes, by worldliness, and by subjection to fashion; who are noted for keenness in business, for explosions of temper, for strange apparitions of the old animal life, and for want of harmony and completeness of character! Consider this, ye people of heterogeneous mixture of the valuable and the worthless! To all such Christians I would say, You are destined to suffer eternal loss, and that loss will be made sensible and visible by the striking differences between you and your possessions and your saved neighbors and their possessions.

The chief point which I wish now to press is this: the eternal life of the saved differs.

To some it means more than to others; to some it means less than to others; the more and the less grow out of the ways in which the saved develop and spend their earthly Christian life.

Let me state my point more fully. The eternal life is not the same to all the saved. It is filled up to each in different proportions. In heaven the redeemed part company and divide. They go into different works and altitudes and employments; greater or lesser, according to their capacities. The eternal life is graded. Some will be in one grade and some in another. All will be equal in the grand negations of heaven—that is, they will have no sin, no sorrow, no suffering, no death; but in the positive things of heaven they will be unequal. The positive things of heaven are such as these: capacities for joys, ability for services, endowments, attainments, aptitudes, earthly accumulations, developed faculties. In these the redeemed will differ, because they take these with them into heaven

in different proportions. These will vary in proportion as men on earth are spiritual athletes and self-denying toilers and consecrated ones and walkers with God. The use which we make of God's grace here on earth will measure the degrees of God's glory which we shall receive in heaven. The after-life is decided upon this side of death: its conditions, its degrees, and its kind. The Judge of all the earth will say, in the great day of accounts, to those who have traded well with the talents of grace given them at their regeneration, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant;" but he will not say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," to those who have not done well and who have not been faithful.

Let us awaken to the fact upon which we dwell. There is such a thing as being saved and nothing more; and there is such a thing as being saved and at the same time being distinguished. When our Lord shall be revealed at the last day, the event will be pro-

ductive of various feelings even in the circle of the saved. Some will rejoice with instantaneous exultation, and, to use the Apostle Peter's words, will "be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless;" while others of his people, to use the Apostle John's words, will "be ashamed before him at his coming." If my point be true you can see how practical it is, and what a tremendous motive to holy and rightly ambitious Christian living it is. It grandly magnifies the possibilities of this present life.

My point is fairly launched; and now that it is, I submit myself to be questioned with regard to it.

I am asked this question: (*a*) Does not your point clash with the doctrine of justification by faith and salvation by grace?

To those who ask the question, differences in glory among the redeemed seem to be an interference with the Redeemer's merits. They wish to be loyal to Christ. They reason thus: "If every Christian stands before

God complete in the righteousness of Christ, there can be no differences among the saved."

No one believes more radically than I do that salvation is wholly by grace, and that justification is wholly by faith, wholly by birth. It is not with justification that I am dealing, but with the earthly life of those who have entered into justification, and with the results of this life. We distinguish between justification by faith and the Christian life lived by justified men. This is what Peter does in his Second Epistle. Speaking to those who had already been justified by faith, he directs them to add to their justifying faith the graces which constitute the complete circle of Christian duty and life. He tells them that if they add these to the faith which justifies, God will add to them an abundant entrance into heaven. If they refuse so to add he tells them that they must enter heaven barren and without fruit. If I understand Peter aright he teaches the same thing that Paul teaches, viz., eternal life is the portion of every one

who believes; it is the gift of God through Jesus Christ; but the forms of it, the manifestations of it, the capital of it, and the capacities and accumulations of it, the riches and glories and joys of it, will be as varied as the fidelities and the additions and the struggles and the consecrations and the services rendered in the temporal and earthly life. The lifelong criminal, hoary with iniquity, steeped to the full in sin and transgression, and yielding only the fag-ends of his godless life to God, if the surrender be in believing sincerity, will be accepted in the all-embracing love of the Father, and will be admitted to heaven. The blood of Jesus Christ is equal to that ransom. But that poor recovered wreck can get no such investment and experience of glory and of joy as he who, after high service of God on earth, mounts up to heaven on the wings of a triumphant faith, saying, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." To make their heaven equal, their life precisely the same degree of

life, their reward the same reward, is against analogy and against reason, against the Word of God. There will be points of resemblance, but there will be points of wide contrast. There will be some things in common characterizing each, but there will be other things most different; and these other differing things deepen and enrich the one life far beyond the other. In the comparison, I might almost say in the contrast, the one will have great gains, the other will suffer great losses.

Let me present a simple statement of the case in regard to justification by faith and the differences among the redeemed in heaven.

“The imputed righteousness of Christ gives to every believer exactly the same title, the same right to enjoy heaven, but it does not give to every believer the same soul for the enjoyment of heaven. Each man remains his individual self, not merged and lost in Christ; an individual self still, with his powers, his character, exactly what his education upon earth made him. The thief who had

but an hour or two of Christian life, and the aged saint who had been disciplined in Christ seventy years, stand exactly on the same footing so far as title is concerned. The Redeemer's merits are the passport for the aged saint, just as they are the passport for the new-made convert. Each has the same heaven—so far they are equal. But unless each can enjoy that one heaven with the same intensity they are not equal.

“Let two men listen to the same swell of glorious music, and yet, just because there is a difference in their internal nervous organization, one will be moved and pleased, but the other will be entranced and thrilled. Let two men gaze on the same masterpiece of sculpture or beautiful painting, one having the perception of the beautiful which comes from cultivation, the other lacking this. The same admission to privilege has been granted to both, the same colors are spread out before both; but is their heaven of enjoyment equal? No, it cannot be. Even so there may be the

same heaven for all the redeemed of God; there may be the same glorious presence shedding its blessedness upon all; there may be the same right to sit at the marriage supper of the Lamb; there may be the same strains of entrancing melody, carrying home the harmonious and the beautiful to the spirits of all who are there; but yet there may be and there will be different enjoyments of these, because of different capacities which have been decided by cultivation on earth, and by dealing with divine things in time."

I am asked a second question relating to the cardinal point of my sermon; it is this:

(*b*) Upon what do you base your teaching concerning the diversities among the redeemed?

1. I base it upon the argument of probability or likelihood.

The argument of probability may be stated thus: It is probable that there will be diversities among the redeemed above, because diversity is everywhere the law in God's uni-

verse. Heaven is no exception to this law. There are diversities and grades among the angels, who are the inhabitants of heaven, and there are great spaces between the angelic grades. There are principalities and powers and mights and thrones and dominions and angels and archangels. Diversity is the law of the universe. Why should the redeemed be made an exception to this law? This is the argument of probability or likelihood.

2. I base my teaching upon the sameness of eternal life and the sameness of the laws which govern eternal life in this world and in the world to come.

Eternal life is not one thing on earth and another thing in heaven; it is the same thing everywhere. Eternal life in the two worlds, heaven and earth, may differ in degree, but not in substance. Every regenerated man who walks the streets of our cities on earth has eternal life just as truly as every translated man who walks the streets of Jerusalem the

Golden. Says Jesus: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." This is definite and authoritative. It declares that the life which the Christian is living on earth is the eternal life. Now if the eternal life on earth and in heaven be one, the law which governs eternal life on earth and in heaven is one and the same. You see the force of all this. It may be presented in the following way: It is a principle in mathematics that, given the arc of a circle, from it you can construct the complete circle. Run the curve of the arc round from its starting-point back to its starting-point and you have the circle. The circle is simply the arc completed. In that part of the eternal life which we now live we have the arc of the circle of eternal life. Continue the law which is in this arc, and which governs it on earth, and you have the complete circle—that is,

you have heaven. God rewards fidelities here, and these rewards make differences between Christians here; this is the arc. God will reward fidelities there, and these rewards will make differences between Christians there; this is the complete circle. There was a vast difference between the rewards of Lot and the rewards of Abraham on earth, and there is nothing in the Bible to show that this difference will be obliterated in heaven. We are nowhere taught that there is a process in death which will lift Lot up to Abraham. There is nothing in all the great Book to put a premium upon the Lot type of life, but there is everything in the great Book to put a premium upon the Abraham type of life.

But I go directly to the Scriptures themselves for my chief argument.

The Scriptures say that there are those who are greatest in the kingdom of heaven and those who are least in the kingdom of heaven. That is my teaching exactly. The

Scriptures tell us that as one star differs from another star in glory—i.e., in the capacity to receive and shed light—so shall it be with God's saints in the resurrection. That is my teaching exactly. The Scriptures command us to "lay up treasures in heaven." This command carries in it the conclusion that the spiritual accumulations of our earthly life pass over the line and are eternal, and that there are eternal degrees of spiritual wealth. Those who obey this command must differ from those who obey it not. Else to what profit is the command?

The Scriptures tell us that faithful servants are rewarded at the coming of the Son of man, when he comes to receive his own into heaven. Some are made rulers over ten cities, some are made rulers over five; and these appointments are made according to the strictest justice. Here is the superiority of some, and here is the subordination of others. Here are heavenly positions and heavenly positions. Some only measure one

half the greatness of others; some measure double the greatness of others. That is my teaching exactly.

The Scriptures give direct exemplifications of my teaching from real life. They give at least two cases in which those who became great on earth through fidelity and application were exalted to greatness and leadership in the heaven-world. They give us the stories of Moses the lawgiver and Elijah the prophet. Their courage, their sacrifice, their arduous work, their noble character here on earth, are set forth in detail; and the influence of their personality is traced in human history. Their biography is complete, and we see them stepping out of time into eternity. One ascends into the lonely mountain and disappears, the other rides through the sky in a chariot of fire and passes out of sight. But is this the end? No. To teach us that they still live, and to teach us that the heaven-life is simply the culmination of the earth-life, the Scriptures draw the veil and allow us to see these

two grand men in eternity. As we see them in the beyond they are just as grand in eternity as they were in time. They were leaders on earth, they are leaders in heaven. They stood in the front ranks here, they stand in the front ranks there. The occasion of drawing the veil is the great event in the biography of Jesus Christ—his transfiguration. The purpose of God requires that the glorious company of the redeemed shall be represented on the holy mount, and that some of the redeemed shall leave heaven for a time and come back to earth for this occasion. This is a great mission. Who will be chosen? That is the question which passes from lip to lip in the glorified throng. That question is settled according to the principles which I am striving to push into prominence by this sermon, viz. : by the fitness for heavenly service and leadership attained through earthly fidelity. The men who, when they were on earth, were chosen for great occasions because they were true men and competent

men and deserving men—these are the men who are chosen for the great transfiguration occasion. Thus it is; Moses and Elijah, the men of God who tower in time, are the men of God who tower in eternity. Their earth-life makes their heaven-life.

I am ready to take up a third question which is asked me; it is this:

(c) Wherein consist the differences, the losses and the gains, of the saved in heaven?

I can only indicate a few items of difference as these present themselves to me, and as my mind imperfectly grasps the life of heaven.

1. I believe that there will be a difference in the degrees of happiness which believers receive from their review of the past, as they look back upon their earth-life and talk it over with one another and with God.

In this regard a narrow earth-life will give a narrow heaven-communion. A broad life broadens fellowship, a narrow life restricts it. Thus it is here. Two men are in partnership

in running a small farm ; and what is the result when they hold communion ? They canvass a few sheep, a few milch kine, a horse or two, a few bushels of grain ; and then their conversation begins to lag and finally stops. Their life and their communion are circumscribed by that little farm. What a vast difference between their fellowship and the fellowship between a Humboldt and an Agassiz, or a Carlyle and an Emerson, when two such men come together and talk and commune ! All the universe comes into such a fellowship, and lives as wide as the sweep of God's laws and as majestic as God's operations are unfolded and canvassed. There is a vast difference between reviewing the commonplace and reviewing the grand. Some in heaven will have only the commonplace to open before God ; but others will have the grand. With multitudes upon entering heaven it will be only a handshake of welcome from God, and no review, because there is nothing to review ; but with others it will be

a handshake of welcome from God, and ages upon ages of conversation about the conflicts and works and denials and burning hopes of earth; and from all this will well forth immense happiness.

2. I believe that the meaning of things in heaven will differ in degrees of fullness to different saints.

For example, they will all sing the same song of redemption, but the song will have widely different meanings. The song of the sanctuary which we sing here is as different as the singers are different. The music is one; but the love, the thanksgiving, the faith, the loyalty which we severally breathe into the language of the song—all these differ according to our separate personalities and our separate experiences. Some take little out of the song of the sanctuary, some take much. Some put little praise into it, some put much praise into it.

3. I believe that the missions of the redeemed in heaven will differ, and that some

will do greater works than others, and that some will reflect more of God than others.

All in heaven do not go to the mountain of transfiguration, for all are not equal to that mission. Such a mission is reserved for personalities of the type of Moses and Elijah. That is the principle which runs through the whole service of heaven, viz., the fitness of the worker for the work; correspondence between the laborer and the labor. If there be a difference in the redeemed in their power to work for God, there will also be a difference in their power to reflect God. This difference will not militate against their individual perfection. Each golden vessel in the temple was perfect, but all of the golden vessels were not equal; some held more precious ointment than others.

Recently in New York I saw in the Metropolitan Museum three beautiful crystals. They were three magnificent works of nature. So far as the human eye could detect, they were all perfect; but they were

not all equal. One was five or six inches in diameter, and was worth five thousand dollars; the second was only three inches in diameter, and was worth not more than half of five thousand dollars; the third was only an inch and a half in diameter, and was worth only a small fraction of five thousand dollars. I noticed this one thing about all of these crystals: they all gleamed with iris-gilded rays, and they all reflected the beauty of the precious things around them, the beauty of sky and earth; and by this power of reflection, which each had, they were all magnificent. But I noticed this also: there was a vast difference in the magnitude of the reflection which they gave to the very same beauties. Earth and sky and the beautiful surroundings looked grander in the reflection of the great crystal than in the reflection of the small crystal. In some such way, I conceive, will be the reflection of God in heaven, and the things of God, by the redeemed. The reflections of God will differ according

to the developed capacities which we carry with us.

4. I believe the saints will differ in heaven in the glorified bodies which their souls will wear, and that the characters which they make on earth will determine their eternal bodies.

The body will have as much individuality as the soul. Paul says that as God gives to each seed its own body, so shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. As each seed has its own body, so each character will have its own body. Is not this true now and here? Do not life and character mold and give expression to the body? The tracings of character upon our physiognomy are known to all. The tracings may be microscopic, but they are there. The *genii* of intelligence, the cherub of love, the golden-winged seraph of spiritual life, vie with one another to see how noble and symmetrical and beautiful the body of man may be made. The finer the character the finer the face, the

finer the whole physical frame. Where the law has full play on earth, character and body match ; in heaven, where there is no interruption of the play of law, there will be a perfect correspondence between character and body. There will be a greater and a lesser glory in our transfigured and heavenly bodies, and that according to the greater or lesser development of the Christian character which we take with us from our earth-life. "God giveth to each seed a body of its own." Character and grace shape our heads for our heavenly coronets.

There are two practical points which I wish to present in shaping this chapter toward its climax :

1. *There is something beyond being saved possible to man, and we should seek that something.*

That something beyond is a high degree of glory in the heaven-life. It is possible to reach great gains in the saved life. It is possible to reach high places among the

principalities and powers and thrones and dominions away up in the dizzy heights of heaven. I call upon you to look up to yonder heights and to aspire to their attainment. How can these heights be reached? We have learned how by our present study. They can be reached by building up in this world a character and a capacity which will match them. Let us seek this corresponding character; let us develop the required capacity.

While yonder high places tower into sight, the lower places come also into vision. There are places at the gate of heaven as well as right-hand and left-hand positions at the throne. These lower places are filled by lower characters; by those who are saved as by fire. I call upon you to aim at rising beyond these lower places. That you may be chosen to elevations beyond these, build into your lives the gold and the silver and the precious stones which are valued of God, and which become the throne and not the gate.

But what is valued of God? What does he call pure gold? What does he esteem as great? What is greatness according to his mind? Ah! that is the precise question; for we must have right conceptions here.

The question is not left unanswered. God gives us the answer in Christianity, which is the latest embodiment of the world's progress.

And what, according to this latest development, is true greatness? Goodness, heart-quality—that is true greatness.

The Christian civilization is differentiated from all other civilizations in that it makes goodness to be greatness. Goodness is what Paul calls gold and silver and precious stones.

As we review the history of the world we see it dividing itself into three stages. In the first power is magnified. Force is deified. The great man is the strong man. In that era Nimrod is the hero after the world's heart. Strength receives the homage of many. In the second power is pushed a step or two back and intellect comes to the front. The

great man is the intellectual man. In that era Homer is the favored idol before whom the populace delight to bow. Genius receives the homage of men. Christianity has inaugurated the third stage. In this era the world is pointed, not to Nimrod, not to Homer, but to Christ, who goes about doing good. Ever after this it is not power, it is not genius, but it is goodness that is exalted. The great man of the future will be the good man of the future.

What seems strange, these three stages of the world's history which I have mentioned are paralleled in the individual experience of man as he admires the forces operating in the world.

What causes the heart of the boy to respond in admiration? David slaying Goliath. Power. Cæsar leading the Tenth Legion. Power. Napoleon at the head of the Old Guard. Power. Let the boy pass into young manhood. What causes his heart to respond in admiration as a young man? Shakespeare

creating his wonderful characters. Genius. Macaulay writing his great history. Genius. Goethe throwing off the marvelous products of his pen. Genius. Let the young man reach his full maturity, and become able to sift and weigh and analyze and judge things by the most approved standard. What calls out admiration from the heart of the mature man? John Howard at work among the reeking prisons. Goodness. George Washington sacrificing himself for the American Republic. Goodness. David Livingstone in the heart of the Dark Continent struggling for the elevation of Africa. Goodness. Abraham Lincoln writing the emancipation proclamation. Goodness. Goodness, that quality of character which carries in it the grandest of all the graces—that is greatness.

In urging goodness as the character which is honored by the Christian era I have spoken of it as embracing all of the noted graces. Allow me to press home the necessity of building these graces into your lives and thus

making your goodness complete. These are the blocks of gold and silver; these are the precious stones.

The teachers under whose tuition the Bible puts us all instruct us to build with the graces. Paul enjoins upon us the grace of sincerity: "Be sincere." According to the compounding of the word—*sine* ("without") and *cera* ("wax")—"Be without wax," that is, be clear-strained honey, as pure and as transparent as the crystal. Live in the sunshine; in everything you do allow others to look you through and through. If you are good and pure in motive and in act you can afford to do that. Nay, more, you will be proud to do that. You will invite investigation. Goodness, like the wide-spread landscape and the expansive ocean and the broad open heaven, is most beautiful when most exposed and when completely unrolled.

John tells us to build with the grace of "love." He exhibits the large place which

love should have in life. It should be the foundation and it should be the dome.

Peter tells us to build life upon "faith." He points out the essentiality of faith, and then shows how the other virtues must be joined to it. He is the most elaborate of all in his instructions. There is no grace that he does not enjoin. The paragraph in his epistle in which he treats of the architecture of the graces is one of the most sublime in all his writings. It is a familiar Scripture: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom."

As seen in the original Greek, the figure

which Peter uses is, to my mind, nothing short of the magnificent and the thrilling. The word translated "add"—"add to your faith"—has been anglicized, and is our word "chorus." Peter says, "Chorus your faith." Sustain it with the music of all the well-tuned graces of heaven. The first violin leads in rendering the grand masterpiece of the musical genius. The composition would be grand were the first violin the only instrument to render it. The sweep of the music would be vast. There would be melody and thrilling chords. But the first violin is not left alone. It is chorused and sustained. The second violin takes a part. The third violin takes a part. The flute takes a part. The deep-toned trumpet takes a part. The bass viol takes a part. The rolling drum takes a part. The tinkling cymbal takes a part. And all together, and in perfect unison, sound out the one grand conception of the one grand mind, and all together chorus the leading instrument. As you listen you are reminded of

the words of the Apocalyptist when he describes the music of the skies and declares that it is like the sound of many waters and the voice of the mighty thunders.

Such is the figure of the Apostle Peter. He says, "Let the grace of faith lead in the grand song of life. Let it pour out its clear triumphant music upon the listening world. Its music is sublime; but compel it not to sing alone. Chorus it. Chorus it. Chorus it with boldness. Chorus it with knowledge. Chorus it with self-mastery. Chorus it with steadfast endurance. Chorus it with piety. Chorus it with love for the brethren. Let all the graces pour out their deep-seated and soul-stirring music, so that the listening world may have a large anticipation of the heavenly harmonies, and a grand rehearsal of the song that is sung by the choir of the redeemed."

My fellow-men, I want to give sharpness and definiteness to our earth-life. I want you to see its possibilities, that you may make

the most of it. I want you to gain the conviction that you can project before your regenerated souls the highest kind of ideals, and that you can reach these and excel these. When I think of the grace of God vouchsafed to the Christian I become the most enthusiastic of optimists, and I believe in the unlimited progress of the Christian. I believe that we can all be in the spiritual life what Longfellow has made his Hiawatha in poetical fiction—we can be marvels of progress.

“ Swift of foot was Hiawatha ;
He could shoot an arrow from him
And run forward with such fleetness
That the arrow fell behind him.”

When we throw our whole being into the religious life, and when we throw our religion into our avocations and professions, we can reach our highest ideals, and we can overtake our most ambitious yearnings. But we can never do this by building with the hay and wood and stubble of life. This is what the Apostle Paul teaches by the parable of life as

a building. He warns us against the low in life, because the low and the false abound, and the great mass of Christians deal with these. The untrue is so common that even martyrdoms are counterfeited. The church of God is full of careless good people with low views and superficial opinions and worldly habits; people who are contented simply to be saved.

These people the Apostle seeks to reach and to move and to instruct. Do you not hear him as he speaks to such? He says to them, "Ye people of low ambitions, there are crowns and crowns in heaven; there are jeweled crowns, and crowns without jewels. It is your duty to win jeweled crowns." Does any one say to him, "I shall be satisfied if I am only saved; this will be enough for me"? He says to such, "Salvation is not the highest thing; there is something far beyond being saved: the glory of God is beyond that. Seek the glory of God. You magnify the glory of God not simply by

reaching salvation, but by reaching high degrees in the saved life, and by developing through the power of his grace the grandest possible character. The grander you make yourself the grander you make the glory of God to appear."

God was glorified in Abraham more than in Lot, and yet both men were saved. Methinks I see Lot entering the throne-room of heaven. There are many crowns there, and he examines them every one. Before one crown he stops, overpowered with admiration and wonderment. Long and ardently he gazes upon that crown. As he appreciatingly looks at it from all sides, lost in thought, an angel approaches him, and Lot begins to talk with the angel about the crown. After the angel has told him all about its construction and its beauties and its history, Lot asks him, "And for whom, O holy one, is this magnificent crown intended? Who shall have the joy of wearing it?" Ah me, what an answer that is which the angel gives Lot! This

is the answer: "Lot, thou man saved as by fire, this magnificent crown was intended for thee; but thou wouldst not labor for it, thou wouldst not win it, and now another shall wear it." Who is Lot? Christian, beware lest thou be Lot.

2. This something possible which is beyond salvation, and of which we have spoken, is alike available to all Christians.

I utter this closing word for the encouragement of those who feel that they are circumscribed in life. I have heard them speak on this wise: "It is possible for those talented by birth, and for the rich in the church, and for those of high position in society, and for people of wide opportunity in the world, to win for themselves high places in heaven; but we are poor, we are not recognized in society, we command no influence, we are not gifted by nature, and hence these high positions of heaven are not within our reach." Such talk is a mistake. The high positions are given to fidelity and to character as a

reward ; and there is no place and no life on earth in which character cannot exist and grow, and in which fidelity to God cannot be cultivated and exhibited. You may be called to do only little and humble acts, but you can put all the essentials of Christianity into little and humble acts. Little acts are expressive either of good or of evil. The giving of a kiss is a little act in itself ; but Judas Iscariot compressed his awful treason into a kiss. Mary expressed the great love and homage of her soul by the kiss which she imprinted on the Saviour's feet. See to it that you have holiness and love and faith in all the atoms that add themselves together to build your life—atoms of desire, of thought, of action, of interest—and your life will be grand.

Moses reached great heights in heaven, and so did Elijah ; but who was Moses and who was Elijah ? Moses was a slave-boy ; Elijah was a man fed by the charity of a starving widow. To keep the poorest of

God's children from despair, Jesus tells the world that the beggar Lazarus, by uncomplainingly serving God in the midst of beggary, reached as high a place in heaven as the rich Abraham, the far-famed sheik of Mamre.

But I have not told you all. The most wonderful fact remains to be told. It is this: the poorest man who ever lived on this earth reached the highest position of glory in heaven. You know his story. He was born in a stable and cradled in the feed-trough of the cattle. He worked for his livelihood in a carpenter-shop. When he reached maturity he gave himself up to the task of teaching his fellow-men without remuneration. When he was at the very zenith of his earthly career he was compelled to say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Thus the man labored, and thus he finished his work, and then went to his reward. But what a reward was his, and what a going was his! One day, as he walked with his

followers out by the mountain of Olivet, a bright light shone far up in the distant dome. Every eye in the little company saw it and watched it with eager gaze. At first it shone like a brilliant star, then it grew into the likeness of a great sun pouring down unequalled light. As it broadened it swept earthward and became a great sheet of splendor; I should rather say, it became a mighty cloud charged with glory and overflowing light. With thrilling majesty it floated straight toward the humble toiler, with his little company of friends. Wrapping itself around the Master of this little school, it bore him bodily from their midst up the pathway whence it came. The glowing sight went up and still up until it was seen again in the far distance, shining like a golden star, and until it faded out of sight and left nothing but the usual dome of azure blue.

But hark ye! What means that sound of singing, which comes from a point out of sight, from the far-away distance into which

the glowing sight has gone? It is the song of the angels who bear the man of God to the gates of heaven. It is the echo of the anthems sung at the abundant entrance ministered to Jesus of Nazareth. The angels who carry Jesus upward cry to the celestial keepers of the gates of heaven, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The celestial keepers cry back in challenge, "Who is this King of glory?" Quick is the response sent back by the angel cohort: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The sound of the singing is the echo of that song which the angels sing. In answer to the angelic summons the everlasting gates majestically rise; and Jesus of Nazareth, passing through the pillars of pearl, sweeps on and up, past the principalities and the powers and the ranks and the dominions of the celestial

heights, until he reaches the highest throne of all, and this he takes.

My fellow-men, Jesus Christ on the highest throne of the universe is not only the grandest fact of history, but he is the most significant symbol within the realm of human knowledge. His presence on yonder throne proclaims that all the ranks of glory are open to the poorest of the poor who are true to themselves and true to their age and true to their opportunities and true to the grace which God has given them, and who walk in the shining footprints of their Christ.

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